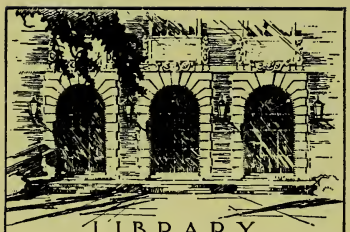

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WENDERHOLME

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A STORY OF LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE

BY

PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON
AUTHOR OF 'A PAINTER'S CAMP,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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WENDERHOLME.

CHAPTER I.

ALICE STEDMAN TO PHILIP STANBURNE.

"MY DEAR MR STANBURNE,—You made me promise to write to you, and yet I hardly can do so without feeling that it is wrong. I am afraid it is very wrong. Papa asked me what had passed between us at Wenderholme, and so, not to tell any fibs, I refused to answer him. He never was really angry with me before, but he was angry then—very angry—and he positively forbade all communication between us during what remains of my minority. In writing to you as I am doing I am disobedient, and you know my father has a right to require my obedience so far as *not* doing anything goes. I don't

think he would have the right to make me marry somebody of his own choosing; but when he tells me not to write to you, for instance, I believe it is my duty to obey. However, I write this letter because I had positively promised you before his prohibition, and you might think that I had forgotten my promise, or would not keep it.

"Papa is so very decided in his opposition to your wishes, that we cannot hope to meet again till after my minority is over. And now he says that if I don't give you up altogether he will leave me no money when he dies, and give me none so long as he lives. If this is really true—and papa seems quite in earnest—I should be afraid of being a burden to you. Papa says you are not very rich, and you have a position that ought to be kept up, and a penniless girl would be a great burden to you. One reason why I accepted your offer so readily was, that I thought my fortune might be of use to you, and I was glad to believe that it might be some compensation for my want of rank. But if you marry a cotton-manufacturer's daughter, like me, without a penny, you might almost as well marry one of the girls that work in the mill. This has determined me to release you from your promise.

"Please, don't try to come to see me. I beg

you will not attempt it. My father has forbidden it. You must not write to me here, either. Pray forgive me, and think no more about me.

"A. S."

"I have opened my letter because I feared it was too cold. It *does* seem very cold when I read it over again, and yet I hardly know what to write to make it seem a little kinder. You know I loved you, dear Philip, and do yet. How sweet it would have been to prove it to you by giving all my life to make you happy! But as this cannot be——

"Oh, dear, I am very sad and miserable!"

The postscript was written in a hurried, agitated hand, and blotted with tears. When Philip Stanburne had read it, his first impulse was to ride off at once to Sootythorn, and go boldly to Mr Stedman's house; but, on reflection, it became clear to him that such a course would only bring about a repetition of that scene in Derbyshire which he still remembered too vividly. On the other hand, Alice *must* be tranquillised and reassured. This resolution of Mr Stedman's to disinherit her in case of her persistence was not, could not be serious. And if it were? Well,

if it were, he had enough to keep a wife upon, in a quiet way, and Alice would be content to live quietly. She was certainly not an ambitious person, and she was not accustomed to an extravagant way of living. "I wonder how much she costs her father a-year?" Philip Stanburne thought; "does she cost him £100 a-year? I doubt whether she costs him much more. I've £700 a-year, clear. If she shares this with me, she'll have as much comfort as she's been used to. We can do perfectly well without old Stedman's money, confound him!"

The next thing was to get a letter to Alice, or, if possible, to see her. He greatly needed some trustworthy confederate and ally.

Suddenly it occurred to him that Margaret Anison might render him that service, and without more hesitation he set off to Whittlecup.

He had to pass through Sootythorn. The town seemed very dull and quiet since the disbanding of the militia, and Mr Garley's Thorn Inn, where Philip Stanburne stayed to get some luncheon, was no longer enlivened by the presence of the mess. Mr Garley received the traveller in his usual somewhat demonstrative manner.

"Good morning, Captain Stanburne; good

morning, sir! Lunch? Yes, sir. Cold roast-beef, cold fowl—any vegetables? Very warm weather to-day, sir. It's 'otter than any day you was out with the regiment, I think; indeed I'm sure it is. It's often very 'ot in Sootythorn at this time of the year—it is indeed."

"Very natural."

"Well, sir, as you say, very natural—so it is, so it is. But can you tell me anything about the Colonel? several gentlemen has been askin' about him lately."

"He has been in London for a few weeks, looking after architects. He has brought one down with him, and they're going to set to work immediately."

"And he doesn't seem much troubled in his mind, does he, sir? The conflagration hasn't—what shall I say?—infected his mental serenity?"

"Colonel Stanburne seemed very happy when I saw him the other day. He was very busy."

"Well, sir, if as you say he was very busy, he was almost sure to be 'appy. There's a genelman of this town as used to be a draper 'ere, and when he retired he purchased a small country place—very small, you know, sir—on the road to Rigton; and when he'd got his little garden into perfect order, so that he'd nothing more to do, he

began to be quite miserable. But one day there came a bull from the next farm, and he amused hisself by jumpin' and buttin' and switchin' his tail, and kickin' up his heels amongst the flower-beds, and he did so much destruction that the genelman was very busy for a long while puttin' things to rights. He cust and swore a good bit, but the bull had brought 'appiness back to him. And so it will be with the Colonel—you'll see if it isn't, sir. Settin' Wenderholme to rights again 'll keep the Colonel 'appy for years and years."

Mr Garley's loquacity was arrested by a message from a "commercial" who wished to speak to him in the commercial room, so Philip Stanburne was left to eat his frugal meal in peace. He stayed at the Thorn no longer than was necessary, and reached Arkwright Lodge at half-past two. The only noteworthy incident of the journey occurred almost at starting. Mr Stedman's mill stands on the right hand, a little before the road turns down to the parade-ground, and Philip could not help looking at the door of the counting-house. Just then it opened, and the manufacturer himself stood upon the threshold. He saw Philip distinctly, and nodded slightly in return for his salute, but his face did not look encouraging.

At any rate, it was something to feel sure that he would not be at Arkwright Lodge. At half-past two, when Philip Stanburne arrived, the Anisons had just dined, and the wine was on the table. After the cordial manner of the house, he was invited to go into the dining-room and taste Joseph Anison's old port. The port was even better than usual that day, because there was a guest new to the house—a guest believed to be himself capable of purchasing fine old port, and of drinking it with appreciation.

Mr Jacob Ogden of Milend had not been able, since his visit to Wenderholme on the day of the presentation of colours, to resume the even tenor of his life. He had forced himself into the old harness, had kept his regular hours at the mill, and gone to Manchester on market-days; but for the first time in his life he experienced that most miserable of all feelings for a real workman, the feeling that his mind was no longer in his work. He could not bind himself down to it; his ideas wandered continually. It took him twice as long to make his accounts as it used to do, and many errors crept in. He was perpetually planning and scheming about future arrangements, in case he should happen to marry. Was there, then, any definite intention in his mind on the sub-

ject of marriage? Had he a young lady in view?

His condition was not yet that in which a man avows to himself that he is in love, but the state which precedes the clear consciousness of the fact. His ideas ran upon marriage as a possibility, much in the same way as, twelve months before, his ideas had run upon the possible construction of a new mill. Now, as the ideal is not a pure creation of the intellect, but rather a refinement or embellishment of the actual, we need an image to which our imaginings may attach themselves; and it may be admitted that the ideal personage who in the future was the possible spouse in Jacob Ogden's day-dreams, bore a striking resemblance to Miss Margaret Anison. Thus it came to pass, that, without ever saying to himself that *she* was that perturbing cause which had thrown him out of the regular orbit of his life, he felt drawn irresistibly towards Whittlecup, having an instinctive feeling that in Whittlecup he would recover that mental serenity which he lacked, and which he felt to be necessary to him as a man of business.

When Philip Stanburne arrived at Arkwright Lodge, Jacob Ogden had become fully conscious of the gravity of his situation. He knew that he was

going to propose. He had not attempted such a thing in the whole course of his life, and felt that natural anxiety which, in all difficult situations, perturbs the minds of the inexperienced. Proposing is one of the most trying things in the world, but it is so simply because men are placed in a dilemma with regard to it which does not attend any other human performance comparable to it in difficulty. An equestrian gentleman in a red coat rides at a tall hedge with perfect confidence. Whence that confidence? From previous successes,—from having on many former occasions gone over hedges of equal elevation without accident — without any consequence either morally or physically disagreeable, but, on the contrary, with a sense of gratified pride—with exultation in a feat accomplished. But in proposing marriage, experience is always experience of the most painful and discouraging kind; and therefore a man comes up to the scratch either with the awkwardness of a perfect tyro, or the timidity of one discouraged by repeated failure. The only exceptions to this are the men who marry three or four times; but even their experience is as nothing. What art of equal difficulty can be learnt in three lessons? It may be suggested that a man might practise the art

of proposing, as an actor learns his part; and that gentlewomen in search of employment might make it a profession to train and educate us, so that we might attain, by long practice, to the art of demanding a lady's hand with consummate confidence and ease, exactly, for instance, as we now invite her to dance. But Jacob Ogden had benefited by no such education; and he was so far from enjoying the advantages which may be gained by practice, that this was his first attempt. Now there are youths who, without either having proposed or having been taught to propose, have nevertheless rehearsed the scene a thousand times in imagination, and so studied their *rôle*. Jacob Ogden had missed this form of self-education, from his firm resolve not to marry at all, which had prevented him from contemplating a proposal as one of those things which he would have to do. Not that he was devoid of foresight; but the future often reserves strange situations for us—situations that we are quite unprepared for, and that our foresight has not foreseen. In his case, too, there had been over-confidence in the strength of his own will and the fixity of his own plans.

He had been three days at Arkwright Lodge, —three whole days away from the mill—from the mills, we may now say, for Jacob Ogden was

already a pluralist in mills. The new one was rising rapidly out of the green earth, and a smooth, well-kept meadow was now trampled into mud and covered with heaps of stone and timber, and cast-iron columns and girders. And for three days had Jacob Ogden left this delightful, this enchanting scene! What a strong attraction there must have been at Whittlecup to draw him from his industrial paradise! He felt bound to the unpoetical Shayton, as Hafiz was to his fair Persian valley when he sang—

> "They will not allow me to proceed upon my travels,
> Those gentle gales of Moselláy,
> That limpid stream of Rooknâbâd."

"I've no time for goin' courtin'," thought Jacob to himself as he sat drinking his port wine after dinner. "I've been here three days, and it's as much as I can afford for courtin'. I mun get it done with afore to-night, one way or other." And he became very assiduous in his attentions to the bottle, just as he was every time he got a tooth drawn; for, in Jacob Ogden's opinion, strong drink was at the same time the safest and the pleasantest anæsthetic.

The resolution once taken, our manufacturer was not a man to draw back from it. He rose suddenly from the dining-table, and said he would

return in a few minutes. The only ladies he found in the drawing-room were Mrs Anison and the lovely object upon which all his thoughts were at this moment concentrated. Mrs Anison was near the fireplace with her work; the lovely object was standing with her back to the door, trying to put her collection of songs into order. The whole top of the grand piano was littered with them.

Ever since Jacob Ogden's arrival at Arkwright Lodge the drawing-room had inspired him with a certain awe, and compelled him to recognise the fact that he was in the presence of superior beings. There was no such elegance at Milend. It is true that there was a room there, with meagre curtains hanging straight from red mahogany cornices to the floor, and an oil-cloth on the table in the middle, and six books that nobody ever read arranged symmetrically on the oil-cloth, and three showy pots on the chimney-piece that Mrs Ogden had given no less than ten shillings apiece for, as she told everybody who was privileged to behold these splendid evidences of her wealth; and it is true that the room so adorned was dignified with the title of drawing-room, and never used from one end of the year to the other. But there are drawing-rooms and

drawing-rooms. That at Arkwright Lodge inspired Jacob Ogden with awe, because it was not only elegant, but seemed, with all its elegance, to belong quite naturally to the people who used it every day. He could have bought Arkwright Lodge and every object it contained at cost price, without suffering even a temporary inconvenience from the outlay; and yet the house and its contents made him feel inferior and deferential. That grand piano commanded his respect more than its value warranted; and even those heaps of songs that Margaret Anison was arranging, with their showy illuminated titles, seemed evidence of the brilliance of her talents and the elevation of her taste. How shall he approach a being so superior to himself—tall, beautiful, and clothed in rustling silk?

She turned round when the door opened, and gave him a gracious smile. "I've found a song, Mr Ogden, that would just suit your voice; suppose you were to come and try it." She opened the song before her, and sat down to the piano. Jacob Ogden came to her side, and began to warble melodious notes. He could sing very fairly when the song was within the compass of his voice, and he felt more at his ease when he had to sing than when he had to talk. He went on

singing for some time; and Margaret Anison made him study the song, and go over it again and again. In the course of these absorbing musical studies, Mrs Anison left her seat near the fireplace, and silently quitted the room. "If he means to make an offer," she thought, "he may as well have the opportunity." With Mrs Anison's prudent views, a husband of the accumulating species was not to be debarred from taking wife at Arkwright Lodge, if such were his amiable intention.

Jacob Ogden did not observe Mrs Anison's departure at the moment when it took place, but he very shortly perceived that it *had* taken place, and then his heart began to play very powerfully under his ribs—so powerfully as rather to interfere with his singing. Miss Anison perceived this, and, pausing in her accompaniment, observed,—

"That D was better sustained last time you sang it. Will you try again?"

"Well, no, I don't think I'll sing any more just now; not just now, you know—another time, perhaps. I've something to say to you, Miss Margaret."

She knew perfectly well what was coming. She had expected it for twenty-four hours, and

she had made up her mind on the subject. Her answer was ready; but an answer cannot decently present itself before the question has made itself to be heard.

"I did think," said Jacob Ogden, "that I should be an old bachelor all my life. But I've altered my mind about that now, and it's you, Miss Anison, that did it."

Now, properly speaking, this is not a question at all. The reader may observe that when written, and even printed, it does not end with a note of interrogation. It is a simple statement—an affirmation—a piece of information concerning the previous and present state of Mr Ogden's mind. But having made this communication, the speaker paused, as if he expected Miss Anison to say something. What, under the circumstances, *could* Miss Anison say?

What she could or would have said can never be known, for during the pause which succeeded to Mr Jacob Ogden's little speech, the gentlemen were migrating from the dining-room, and Margaret's quick ear informed her of the fact. In an instant she turned again to the piano, and thundered away vigorously. The door opened, and Philip Stanburne was by her side. Jacob Ogden retreated from the piano, and two minutes after-

wards had the mortification of seeing Mr Stanburne in the place he had just occupied, and saying something, evidently of a confidential nature, in Miss Anison's private ear, under cover of the artillery of the keys. It was clear that there existed an intelligence between them; for she nodded three or four times in answer to what Mr Stanburne was saying, and there was a look of satisfaction on his countenance.

Now Jacob Ogden had been so excited when he made that communication to the young lady, that he believed he had made a proposal in due form. "She'd time enough to say yes or no, or give me some sort of a sign," he thought; and then gradually he arrived at the saddening conclusion that his case was hopeless, and that the young gentleman by the piano, so much more a gentleman than himself, was the fortunate, the accepted lover. If Margaret Anison had even received an offer from Philip Stanburne, Jacob Ogden's surmise would have been perfectly correct; but seeing that Mr Stanburne never opened his lips to Margaret except concerning his attachment to Alice Stedman, the cotton-manufacturer's chances were much better than he ventured to believe.

CHAPTER II.

Mr Jacob Ogden was to have returned to Shayton the same evening, but fate had ordered it otherwise. He bade adieu to the ladies of Arkwright Lodge, and accompanied Mr Anison as far as Whittlecup. He had promised to see the print-works before his departure, and went thither according to his promise; but even the pleasure of looking through what he called "a nice concern," which to him was at least equal to the pleasure which an æsthetic mind experiences in a picture-gallery or a cathedral—even the thought of this gratification was not sufficient to relieve his present melancholy and gloom. So visible, indeed, was his dejection, that Mr Anison could not help remarking it.

"I hope you are not unwell, Mr Ogden; you don't seem in your usual good spirits this afternoon."

"I'm well enough in my health, but I'm very un'appy."

"I'm exceedingly sorry to hear it. No bad news, I hope?"

"It's your daughter, Miss Margaret. I've been thinking about her ever since we were at Wendrum, and I told her just now; but it's no use with that young Stanburne in the way. I wish I was dead, I do."

Mr Anison informed his guest of the state of affairs between Philip Stanburne and Miss Stedman; and his communication was all the more agreeable that he did not think it necessary to admit the possibility of a preference which might be inconvenient. He then ventured so far as to ask what had passed between his daughter and his guest; and though Mr Ogden's explanations were not on all points accurate—for his emotion had been far too strong to allow him to remember what he had said—it became clear to Mr Anison that his daughter had not had a fair opportunity to give any answer at all. "If she would only have Mr Ogden, what a relief it would be," he thought. "The fact is, we *must* marry her—and here's a rich man. She'll never do for a poor man's wife." Jacob Ogden's next speech chimed in very harmoniously with these reflections.

"I can afford to keep a wife. You may look at my banker's account whenever you like. I've a good property already in land and houses, and I'm building a new mill."

"There is no necessity for going into detail," Mr Anison said, deprecatingly; "every one knows that you are a rich man."

Ogden laughed, half inwardly. It was a chuckling little laugh, full of the intensest self-satisfaction. "They think they know," he said, "but they don't know—not right. Nobody knows what I'm worth, and nobody knows what I shall be worth. I'm one o' those as sovereigns sticks to, same as if they'd every one on 'em a bit o' stickin'-plaister to fasten 'em on wi'. If I live ten year, I s'll be covered over wi' gold fourteen inch thick."

"Is there any positive necessity for you to leave us now? Why not remain a little longer?"

"Do you think I've any chance at your house?"

Mr Anison laughed at the eagerness of Ogden's manner. Then he said, "I see no reason for you to be discouraged. You cannot expect a young lady to accept you before you have really asked her."

Ogden hesitated a moment, and then determined to go on to Shayton and write a letter.

CHAPTER III.

And this is the letter Jacob Ogden wrote :—

"Miss Margaret Anison.

"Miss,—When I was at your house this afternoon, I was saying something to you that I did not quite finish, because other people came in just at the time. I wished to ask you to be so kind as to marry me. I believe I shall be a good husband—at any rate, I promise to do all I can to be one. My wife shall have everything that a lady wants, and I will either build a new house or purchase one, as she may like best. There's a good one on sale near Shayton, but I don't mind building, if you prefer it. I am well able to keep my wife as a lady. I may say that I have always been very steady, and not in the habit of drinking. I never go into an ale-house, and I never spend any foolish money. I shall feel very anxi-

ous until I receive your answer, as you will easily understand; for my regard for you is such that I most sincerely wish your answer may be favourable.—Yours truly, JACOB OGDEN."

Though rather a queer letter, and singularly devoid of the graces of composition and the tenderness of love, its purport, at least, was intelligible. The reply showed that this time the lover had made himself clearly understood.

"MY DEAR MR OGDEN,—I have received your kind letter, and have only to say that I willingly accept the proposal which it contains. I have no doubt that you will amply fulfil all your good and amiable promises.

"Mamma desires me to say that there will be a room for you here whenever your business engagements permit you to visit us.—Yours most faithfully, MARGARET ANISON."

It is to be supposed that Mr Ogden felt sensations of profound happiness on reading this little perfumed note; but when a man is an old bachelor by nature, he does not become uxorious in a week or two; and we may confess that, after the unpleasantness of the first shock, a positive

refusal would have left the lover's mind in a state of far more perfect happiness and calm. His pride was gratified, his passion was fortunate in dreaming of its now certain fruition, and he knew that such a woman as Margaret Anison would add greatly to his position in the world. He knew that she would improve it in one way, but then he felt anxiously apprehensive that she might deteriorate it in another. He would become more of a gentleman in society with a lady by his side, but a wife and family would be a hindrance to his pecuniary ambition. From the hour of his acceptance he saw this a good deal more clearly than he had done since this passion implanted itself in his being. He had seen it clearly enough before he knew Margaret Anison, but the strength of a new passion acting upon a nature by no means subtly self-conscious, had for a time obscured the normal keenness of his sight. After re-reading Margaret's note for the tenth time, Mr Jacob Ogden said to himself: "She's a fine girl—there isn't a finer lass in all Manchester; but I'm a damned fool—that's what I am. What have I to do goin' courtin'? Howsomever, it's no good skrikin' over spilt milk—we mun manage as well as we can. We've plenty to live on, and she can have four or five servants, if

she'll nobbut look well afther 'em." Then he went into the little sitting-room, where his mother sat mending his stockings.

"Mother," he said, abruptly, "there's news for you. Somebody's boun' to be wed."

The stocking was deposited in Mrs Ogden's lap, and she looked at her son with fixed eyes.

"It's owther our Isaac or me, and it isn't our Isaac."

"Why, then, it's thee, Jacob."

"You're clever at guessin', old woman; you always was a 'cute un."

"What! are you boun' to wed somebody at Whittlecup?"

"She doesn't live a hundred mile off Whittlecup."

Mrs Ogden rose from her seat and laid down her stocking, and made slowly for the door. She stopped, however, midway, and with a stately gesture pointed to the mended stocking. "Can she darn like that?"

"She 'appen can do, mother."

"Han you seen her do?"

"No."

"Nor nobody else nayther. But what I reckon you think you can do b'out havin' your stockins mended when you get your fine wife into th'

house, and you think servants 'll do everything. But if you'd forty servants, you'd be badly off without somebody as knew how to look afther 'em all. And if they cannot do for theirselves, they cannot orther other folk—not right."

"Well, but, mother," said Jacob, deprecatingly. He was going to suggest consolatory considerations, founded upon the apparent order and regularity of the housekeeping at Arkwright Lodge, in the midst of which Miss Anison had been educated.

But Mrs Ogden was not disposed to enter into a discussion which would have involved the necessity of giving her son a hearing, and she cut short his expostulation with a proverb, solemnly enunciated,—

"As they make their bed, so they must lie," and then she left the room.

"Th' old woman isn't suited," thought Jacob, "but it makes nothing who it had been, she would have been just the same. She used always to reckon she could like me to get wed, but I knew well enough that when it came to the point I could never get wed so as to suit her. Whoever I wedded, she'd always have said it should have been somebody else." The fact was, that whilst Mrs Ogden warmly and sincerely

approved of marriage as a sort of general proposition, and had even advised her son for many years past to take unto himself a wife, her jealousy only slumbered so long as the said wife remained a vague impersonal idea. Mrs Ogden had not much imagination, and the mere notion of a possible wife for Jacob was very far from arousing in her breast the lively sensations which were sure to be aroused there by a visible, criticisable, young woman, of flesh and blood, with the faults that flesh is heir to. Now she had seen Margaret Anison, and she had thought at Wenderholme, "She might happen do for our Jacob;" but when "our Jacob" announced that he had decided to espouse Margaret Anison, that was quite a different thing. In a word, Mrs Ogden was jealous of the young lady at Arkwright Lodge, exactly as she would have been jealous of any other young lady who might have been honoured with Mr Jacob Ogden's preference.

CHAPTER IV.

If Jacob Ogden was not particularly enchanted after his acceptance, it may also be confessed that the young lady who so graciously accepted him did it without any inward glow of rejoicing. "There's little chance for me to make the *mariage d'inclination*," she said to herself, "and if I cannot, I will make the *mariage de convenance*, and this chance is as good a one as I am ever likely to have. Mr Ogden is very rich—which, after all, is the main point nowadays, and for people in our way of life—and he seems to be very fond of me, so no doubt I shall be happy enough. It's no use sighing about Mr Stanburne—there's only one woman in the world for him. It's wonderful how he comes and talks to me about her! In his modesty, or else in the blindness of his love for her, he does not suspect me of caring particularly about him at all, and he asks me to be

a medium between them both, and take his love to Alice, and bring back Alice's love to him, as if I were the safest messenger he could choose. Well, I'll try to take his messages, but it's rather a hard task."

These thoughts passed through Margaret Anison's mind as she sat in her own room before her little writing-desk, and indited the note which ought to have gladdened the heart of her lover at Milend. When it had gone to Whittlecup in the post-bag, she sat very quietly in the drawing-room with her mother and sisters, saying nothing, apparently in perfect calm, in reality going through one of those great crises of passion which determine the future of a human life. One minute she felt a conscious hatred of Philip Stanburne, and a satisfaction in being able to let him know that she was engaged; and then the next there came emotions of friendly tenderness and forgiveness for him, with active contempt for the Shayton cotton-spinner to whom she had just promised herself. As for Alice, what was she to think of Alice? She hardly thought about Alice at all, favourably or unfavourably. "Lissy" was a sort of permanent but insignificant personage in Margaret's world, such as we expect to be always amongst the recurrences of

life. At least such was the opinion which Margaret believed herself to entertain about Lissy; but this belief may have been one of those which are owing rather to an effort of the will than to the spontaneous action of the mind. Margaret had determined not to honour Alice with her jealousy, and had excluded her as much as possible from her thoughts. But there is always this great danger about tabooing persons and things, either by the action of a national or an individual will, that from having resolved so long not to think about them at all, we are very likely to find ourselves, if the occasion should arise which compels us to think about them, utterly unable to do so in an accurate and reasonable way.

Margaret conveyed Philip Stanburne's message to Alice with a perfection of fidelity which cost her a little effort; and when that young gentleman called again at Arkwright Lodge, he was consoled by the sweet assurance that she was still willing to consider herself engaged to him "if he wished it." It had unfortunately happened on the occasion of this visit, as on the occasion of the preceding one, that Mr Stedman saw and recognised Philip Stanburne as he drove through Sootythorn on his road to Whittlecup, and it did

not need much power of the penetrative imagination to guess that he would pass an hour or two with the Anisons. Mr Stedman went a step further in his deductions, and arrived at the inference that Philip Stanburne's real purpose was to meet his daughter Alice at Arkwright Lodge—a purpose which he resolved to defeat by the simple though somewhat tyrannical expedient of forbidding her to go there. He had not, however, quite resolution enough to exclude Margaret Anison from his house at Chesnut Hill. She went there often and openly, and treated the lord of the mansion with her accustomed fearlessness of manner.

Matters had been in this condition for a month or two, when Jacob Ogden, whose visits to his beloved one had been made rare by the exigencies of business, became somewhat importunate about the fixing of his wedding-day. It was not that he looked forward thereto with feelings of very eager or earnest anticipation, but he had a business-like preference for "fixtures" and dates over the vague promises of an indefinite *avenir*. Miss Anison, on the contrary, seemed to have a rooted objection to such rigid limitations of liberty; and, like a man in debt whose creditor proposes to draw upon him for an inexorable thirtieth of next

month, felt that the vague intention of paying some time was for the present less hard and harassing to the mind. And as the debtor procrastinates, so did Margaret Anison procrastinate. Her heart was not in this marriage, but her interest was; and, so far as she avowed to herself any purpose at all, her purpose was to gain time, and keep Jacob Ogden as a resource, when all chance of Philip Stanburne should be lost finally and for ever.

She was quite acute enough to perceive the great advantage of serving as ambassadress between Philip and Alice Stedman. It made him come to Arkwright Lodge, it made him talk to her confidentially, it gave her many opportunities of winning his gratitude and approval, and making herself generally agreeable to him. And she *could* make herself very agreeable when she chose. Her fine person, and her perfect self-possession, and knowing use of her natural gifts and charms, were not easily to be resisted in the long-run without the armour of a strong attachment elsewhere. Clearly her game was to act for the present as an honest friend to both Philip and Alice, trusting to the obstinacy of old Mr Stedman, and the force of time and circumstances, to bring about the ultimate dissolution of their en-

gagement. Yet, on the other hand, considering that a marriage of some sort was necessary, it would not do to throw away the chance of such a capital match of another kind as the Shayton manufacturer offered. It is much easier for a woman to protract an engagement, when she chooses, than it is for the masculine partner. He has asked to be married, and if he makes pretexts for delay, there is a manifest inconsistency between his first attitude and his subsequent one. The lady, on the other hand, has given no more than a passive consent or acquiescence, and may easily, with a little skill, postpone the fulfilment of her promise, whilst avoiding the danger of letting slip her prize altogether.

Miss Anison, in a matter of this kind, was a great deal cleverer than Jacob Ogden, who, though not easily taken in by a man in men's business, had little experience of womankind, and none whatever of polite young ladies and their ways. Margaret Anison had found a capital excuse for delay in the necessity for building a new house, and she set Jacob Ogden to work thereupon with an energy at least equal to that which he lavished on the new mill. He wanted very much to have the house close to the factory, but the young lady preferred the tranquillity of the coun-

try, and went to Milend expressly to select a site. She chose a little dell that opened into the Shayton valley; and though of all views in the world the pleasantest for Mr Ogden would have been a view of his own mills, he was denied this satisfaction, and his windows looked out upon nothing but green fields. "If they'd nobbut been my own fields," Jacob thought, "I wouldn't so much have cared. Not but what a good mill is a prettier sight than the greenest field in Lancashire, but its no plezur to me to look out upon other folks' property." And the worst of it was, that there was no chance of ever purchasing the said property, for it belonged to an ancient Lancashire family, which had a wise hereditary objection to parting with a single acre of land.

Mrs Ogden, now that the engagement was a *fait accompli*, expressed the most perfect readiness to quit Milend and go and live in "th' Creampot," which, as the reader is already aware, was the expressively rich appellative of the richest of her little farms. But such was the amiable and truly filial consideration displayed by Margaret Anison towards her future mother-in-law, that she would on no account hear of such an arrangement. "Mrs Ogden," she said, "had always been accustomed to Milend, and it would

be quite wrong to turn her out;" indeed she "would not hear of such a thing." So the obedient Jacob hurried on the construction of a mansion worthy of the young lady who had honoured him with her affections — a mansion to be replete with all modern comforts and conveniences, such as abounded at Arkwright Lodge.

CHAPTER V.

Things might have gone on in this way for a very long time, if Philip Stanburne's impatience had not suddenly given them a new turn. It became intolerable to him to be cut off from all direct communication with Miss Stedman, and one day he went boldly to Chesnut Hill. He went there, not under cover of the darkness, as cowardly lovers do, but in the broad openness of such daylight as is ever to be seen in Sootythorn. I think, however, that it would have needed still greater courage on his part to present himself there about eight o'clock in the evening; for in the day-time Mr Stedman was usually at his factory, whereas about eight in the evening a friend might count upon the pleasure of finding him at Chesnut Hill.

The servant-maid who opened the door to Philip showed him at once into the drawing-room. "What name shall I say, sir?" she asked. Philip

gave his name, and waited. He had not inquired whether Miss Stedman was at home—he felt a slight embarrassment in inquiring about Miss Stedman—and the servant on her part had simply asked him to walk in.

He had waited about five minutes, when a heavy step became audible in the passage, and the door of the room was opened. The Reverend Abel Blunting stood before him.

"Pray sit down, sir," said the reverend gentleman; "I hope you are quite well. I hope I see you well. Mr Stedman is not at home—he is down at the mill—but I am expecting him every minute."

Mr Blunting's bland amiability ought no doubt to have awakened amiable feelings in Mr Stanburne's breast, but, unfortunately, it had just the opposite effect. "I did not come here to see Mr Stedman," he replied; "I came to see his daughter."

Now Mr Blunting was a powerful man, both physically and mentally, and a man by no means disposed to yield when he considered firmness to be a duty. In the present instance he *did* consider it necessary to prevent an interview between Alice and her lover, and he quietly resolved to do so at all costs. "I am sorry," he said, "that you cannot see Miss Stedman."

"Why cannot I see her? Is she not at home?"

"She is under this roof, sir."

"Then I will see her," Philip answered, and rose to his feet.

"Pray sit down, sir—pray sit down," said Mr Blunting, without stirring from the easy-chair in which he had ensconced himself. He made a gesture with his hand at the same time, which said as plainly as it could, "Calm yourself, young gentleman, and listen to me."

"Pray sit down. Miss Stedman is not very well to-day; indeed she has not been really well, I am sorry to say, for some time past She does not rise until the afternoon, and of course you cannot go into her bedroom."

"Why not? Come with me if you like. The doctor may go there, I suppose?"

"The doctor goes there professionally, and so does Miss Stedman's spiritual adviser."

"I could do her more good than either of you. How wretchedly lonely she is!"

"My wife comes to sit with Miss Stedman every day."

"What *is* the matter with her? Tell me the plain truth."

"Most willingly—most happy to reassure you, sir. There is really nothing serious in Miss

Stedman's case; the medical men are agreed upon that. She merely suffers from debility, which has been neglected for some time because she did not complain. But now that the ailment is known, it will be combated in every way. Already there is a decided improvement. But in her present state of weakness, agitation of any kind might be most prejudicial—most prejudicial; and therefore I hope you will easily see that I dare not accept the responsibility of permitting an interview between you."

"I shall wait here till Mr Stedman comes, and ask his permission."

"That is a very proper course to pursue, and I highly approve your resolution. But from what we both know of Mr Stedman's sentiments, it seems scarcely probable that he will grant your request. You will do well, however, to wait and see him. It is always the best, when there are differences of opinion, that the contending parties should meet personally."

Here there was a pause of a minute or two, after which Mr Blunting resumed, with great politeness of manner,—

"I fear you must need refreshment, sir, if you have come from a distance. Your own residence, as I am informed, is at a considerable distance

from this place. In Mr Stedman's absence, I may take upon myself to offer you something. Would you like a sandwich and a glass of wine? I cannot offer to drink wine with you, being myself a total abstainer, but as I know that you use it in great moderation, it is not against my conscience to ring for the decanters."

Philip Stanburne had eaten nothing since six in the morning, and willingly accepted the clergyman's proposition. Perhaps he accepted it the more willingly that he felt the need of all his courage for the approaching interview with Mr Stedman. When the decanters and the sandwich came, the teetotal parson filled a wine-glass with formal courtesy, and young Stanburne could not help feeling a certain liking, and even admiration, for the man. In truth, without being a gentleman, Mr Blunting had many of the best qualities of a gentleman. He was as brave as a man well could be, more learned than most members of his own learned profession, and he had a more than feminine softness of manner.

Whilst Philip was engaged with his sandwiches and sherry, he heard the hall-door open, and a manly step on the stone floor. Though by no means a coward, either morally or physically, he had a sensitive constitution, and his pulse was

considerably accelerated by the knowledge that Mr Stedman had entered the house. The heavy steps passed the drawing-room door, and became gradually less and less audible as they ascended the stairs.

"Mr Stedman is gone to see his daughter," said Mr Blunting. "He always goes straight to her room when he returns from the mill. He is a most affectionate father."

"Where his prejudices are not concerned," added Philip Stanburne.

"Where his conscience is not involved, you ought to say. His objection to your suit is strictly a conscientious objection. Personally, he really likes you, and your position would be an excellent one for Miss Alice; indeed it is beyond what she might have hoped for. But Mr Stedman—ah! he is coming now."

Philip had somewhat hastily finished his sandwich, and resumed his first seat. Mr Stedman opened the door slowly, and walked in. He gave no sign of astonishment on seeing Philip (who rose as he entered), but simply bowed. Then, turning to Mr Blunting, he said, quietly, "I think Alice would be glad to see you now," on which Mr Blunting left the room.

There was an expression of deep sadness on

John Stedman's face as he sat down and looked fixedly at the table. His eyes looked in the direction of the decanters, but he evidently did not see them. Suddenly recalling himself to the things about him, he saw the decanters before anything else, and said,—

"Have you had a glass of wine? Take another. Take one with me."

Astonished at this reception, Philip Stanburne held his glass whilst John Stedman filled it. A tremulous hope rose in his breast. What if this man were relenting? what if the icy barrier were gradually thawing away?

They drank the wine in silence, and Mr Stedman sat down again. "Sit down," he said, "sit down. You are come to talk to me about my daughter. You are under my roof, and are my guest. I will listen to you patiently, and I will answer you plainly. I can do no more than that, can I?"

Philip urged his suit with all the eloquence at his command. John Stedman listened, as he had promised, patiently; and when his guest's eloquence had exhausted itself, he spoke in this wise:—

"I explained my views to you on a former

occasion, in Derbyshire. It is no use going over all that ground again. But since we met then, the position of matters has changed somewhat. My daughter is getting nearer to her majority; at the same time, you and she have made an engagement between yourselves without my sanction, and I have reason to suspect that you have corresponded. Miss Margaret Anison has been here rather too much lately, and I have politely informed Miss Margaret Anison that she had better remain at Arkwright Lodge. But another thing has altered matters still more—that is, my daughter's health. I'm very much grieved to say that I haven't a great deal of confidence in her constitution. She gets weaker every day."

"Mr Blunting says she is getting stronger again now."

"Stronger? Well, momentarily she may, by the help of tonics and stimulants, but it will not last. She was never really strong, but if I'd not been so much absorbed in business, I might have taken her more out, and given her more exercise. I am ready to give up business now. I'd give up anything for my Alice. Poor Alice, poor Alice!"

Philip Stanburne became inoculated with Mr

Stedman's openly-expressed alarm. "Are you seriously afraid, sir?" he asked, with intense anxiety.

Mr Stedman looked at him fixedly and seemed absorbed in his own thoughts. "You love my girl, young man, but you don't love her as I do. Ever since I have got this fear into my heart and into my brain I can neither eat nor sleep. I think sometimes I shall go out of my mind. A man loves a daughter, Mr Stanburne, differently from the way he loves a son. If I'd had a son, I shouldn't have felt so anxious, for it seems that a lad should bear illnesses and run risks; but a tender little girl, Philip Stanburne—a tender little girl, and a great rough fellow like me to take care of her!"

"Is there any change in your feelings towards me, sir?"

"No, none at all. I always liked you very well, and I like you very well still. There isn't a young fellow anywhere who would suit me better, if it weren't for your being such a Papist. I'll tell you what I'll do with you, if you like. You give me an honest promise not to marry my daughter before twelve months are out, and you shall see her every day if you like. And if you can cheer her up and make her get her strength

back again, you shall have her and welcome, Papist or no Papist. I'd let her marry the Pope of Rome before I'd see her as sad as she has been during the last two or three months. Stop your dinner, will you? That sandwich is nothing; our dinner-time's one o'clock, and it's just ten minutes to. Alice 'll get up when she knows you're here, I'll warrant."

The reader will easily believe that Philip Stanburne heard this speech with a joy that made him forget his anxiety about Alice. He would bring gladness to her, and with gladness, health. How bright the long future seemed for these two, true lovers always, till the end of their lives! O golden hope, fair promise of happy years!

But the doctor, who had been at Chesnut Hill that morning, had heard a little faint sound in his polished black stethoscope, which was as terrible in its import as the noise of the loudest destroyers, as the crack of close thunder, the roar of cannon, the hiss of the hurricane, the explosion of a mine!

CHAPTER VI.

Let this part of our story be quickly told, for it is very sad! Let us not dwell upon this sorrow, and analyse it, and anatomise it, and lecture upon it, as if it were merely a study for the intellect, and caused the heart no pain!

It is the middle of winter. The streets of Sootythorn are sloppy with blackened snow, the sky is dreary and grey, and dirtied by the smoke from the factory-chimneys. Sootythorn is dismal, and Manchester is all in a fog. The cotton-spinners' train that goes from Sootythorn to Manchester is running into a cloud that gets ever denser and yellower, and the whistle screams incessantly. The knees of the travellers are covered with 'Guardians,' and 'Couriers,' and 'Examiners,' for there is not light enough to read comfortably. One manufacturer asks his neighbour a question: "Where is John Stedman

of Sootythorn? He uses comin' by this train, and I haven't seen him as I cannot tell how long."

The question interests us also. Where is John Stedman?

Not at Chesnut Hill, certainly. There is nobody at Chesnut Hill but the old gardener and his wife. He tends the plants in the hothouse, and keeps them comfortable in this dreary Lancashire winter by the help of Lancashire coal. But the house is all shut up, except on the rare days when a bit of sunshine comes, and the old woman opens the shutters and draws up the blinds to let the bright rays in. Everything seems ready for Alice, if she would only come. There is her little pretty room up-stairs, and there are twenty things of hers in the drawing-room that wait for their absent mistress.

Alice had loved her home. Perhaps the reader, in some pleasant mansion in the south, in pure and fragrant air, with no clouds but natural ones, and no fog but the silvery mist that rises from some uncontaminated river—perhaps, I say, a reader so situated may wonder how a girl of taste could ever love an ugly house in a filthy manufacturing town. But Chesnut Hill was not uglier than English houses usually

are, though it certainly had no pretension to beauty; and as for dirt, it was as clean inside as a cocoa-nut. And, in spite of the smoke, there were such evidences outside of a resolute intention to be clean—such white steps, such shining brass, such bright windows, such glittering walks of silvery quartz—that the place conveyed a far stronger mental impression of cleanliness than the French *maison de campagne* or the Italian *palazzo* in regions where coal-smoke and its rain of impurities have been unknown since the creation of the world. For that which conveys the idea of cleanliness is not so much cleanliness itself as the evidence of determined fighting against dirt. And as Sootythorn is one of the very dirtiest towns in all England, the housewives there have plenty of dirt to fight against, and their cleansing instincts have grown mighty in the unending struggle.

But here are we talking about shining brass knobs and beautiful white steps, when the house is as empty and sad and desolate as if it were full of dust and cobwebs. Miss Alice is far away in the south, and her father is with her—and there is a third, who never leaves them.

They had been travelling towards Italy, but when they reached Avignon, Alice became sud-

denly worse, and they stayed there to give her a long rest. The weather happened to be very pure and clear, and it suited her. The winter weather about Avignon is often very exhilarating and delicious, when the keen frost keeps aloof, and the dangerous winds are at rest.

As for saving Alice now, not one of the three had a vestige of delusive hope. The progress of the malady had been terribly rapid; every week had been a visible advance towards the grave. John Stedman had hoped little from the very beginning, Philip Stanburne had hoped much longer, and Alice herself longest of all. But none of the three hoped any longer now.

When Alice found herself settled at Avignon, she felt a strong indisposition to go farther. The railway tired and agitated her, and the dust made her cough more painful. "Papa," she said one day, as she sat in her easy-chair looking up the Rhone, "I think we cannot do better than just remain where we are. I shall not keep you in this place very long. No climate can save me now, and this weather is as pleasant as any Italian weather could be. I am cowardly about travelling, and it troubles me to think of the journey before us." Mr Stedman feebly tried to encourage Alice, and talked of the beautiful

Italian coast as if they were going to see it; but it soon became tacitly understood that Alice's travels were at an end.

Mr Stedman, who, since he had left England with his daughter, had never considered expense in anything in which her comfort was, or seemed to be, involved, sought out a pleasanter lodging than the hotel they had chosen as a temporary resting-place. He found a charming villa on the slopes that look towards Mount Ventoux. The view from its front windows included the great windings of the Rhone and the beautiful mountainous distance; whilst from the back there was a very near view of Avignon, strikingly picturesque in composition, crowned by the imposing mass of the Papal palace. Alice preferred the mountains, and chose a delightful little *salon* up-stairs as her own sitting-room, whilst her bedroom was close at hand. There was a balcony, and she liked to sit there in the mild air during the warmest and brightest hours.

Mr Stedman's powerful and active nature suffered from their monotonous life at the villa, and he needed exercise both for the body and the mind. Alice perceived this, and, well knowing that it was impossible for her father to do anything except in her service, plotted a little

scheme by which she hoped to make him take the exercise and the interest in outward things which in these sad days were more than ever necessary to him.

"Papa," she said one day, "I think if I'd a little regular work to do, it would do me good. I wish you would go geologising for me, and bring me specimens. You might botanise a little, too, notwithstanding the time of the year; it would be amusing to puzzle out some of the rarer plants. It's a very curious country, isn't it, papa? I'm sure, if I were well, we should find a great deal of work to do together here." Then she began to question him about the geology and botany of the district, and made him buy some books which have been written upon these subjects by scientific inhabitants of Avignon. Her little trick succeeded. Mr Stedman, under the illusion that he was working to please his poor Alice, trudged miles and miles in the country, and extended his explorations to the very slopes of Mount Ventoux itself. In this way he improved the tone of his physical constitution, and Alice saw with satisfaction that it would be better able to endure the impending sorrow.

He had long ceased to treat Philip Stanburne

with coldness or distrust. His manner with his young friend was now quite gentle, and even affectionate, tenderly and sadly genial. The one point on which they disagreed was no longer a sore point for either of them. One day, when they were together, they met a religious procession, with splendid sacerdotal costumes and banners, and Philip kneeled as the host was carried by. Their conversation, thus briefly interrupted, was resumed without embarrassment, and Mr Stedman asked some questions about the especial purpose of the procession, without the slightest perceptible expression of contempt for it. He began to take an interest in the charities of the place, and having visited the hospital, said he thought he should like to give something, and actually left a bank-note for five hundred francs, though the managers of the institution, and the nurses, and the patients, were Romanists without exception. Meanwhile, he read his Bible very diligently every day, and the prayers of the little household, in which Philip willingly joined.

During one of Mr Stedman's frequent absences on the little scientific missions ordered by his daughter Alice, she and Philip had a conversation which he ever afterwards remembered.

"Philip," she said, "do you ever think much

about what *might have been*, if just one circumstance had been otherwise? I have been thinking a great deal lately, almost constantly, about what might have been, for us two, if my health had been strong and good. People say that love such as ours is only an illusion—only a short dream—but I cannot believe that. It might have changed, as our features change, with time, but it would have remained with us all our lives. Do you ever fancy us a quiet respectable old couple, living at the Tower, and coming sometimes to Sootythorn together? I do. I fancy that, and all sorts of things that might have been—and some of them would have been, too—if I had lived. There's one thing vexes me, and that is, that I never saw the Tower. I wish I had just seen it once, so that I might fancy our life there more truly. How glad dear papa would have been to come and stay with us, and botanise and geologise amongst your rocks there! You would have let him come, wouldn't you, dear?—I am sure you would have been very kind to him. You *will* be kind to him, won't you, my love, when he has no longer his poor little Lissy to take care of him? Don't leave him altogether by himself. I am afraid his old age will be very sad and lonely. It grieves me to think of that, for he will be old

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in a few years now, and his poor little daughter will not be near him to keep him cheerful. Fancy him coming home every evening from the mill, and nobody but servants in the house! Go and stay with him sometimes, dear, at Chesnut Hill, and get him to go to the Tower, and you will sometimes talk together about Alice, and it will do you both good."

Philip had kept up manfully as long as he was able, but the vivid picture that these words suggested of a world without Alice was too much for him to bear, and he burst into passionate tears. As for Alice, she remained perfectly calm, but when she spoke again it was with an ineffable tenderness. She took his hand in hers, and drew him towards her, and kissed him. Again and again she kissed him, smoothing his hair caressingly with her fingers—gentle touches that thrilled through his whole being. "You don't know, my darling," she said, "how much I love you, and how miserable it made me when I thought we must be separated in this world. It isn't so hard to be separated by death; but to live both of us in the same world, seeing the same sun, and moon, and stars, even the same hills, and not to be together, but always living out of sight and

hearing of each other, and yet so near—it would have been a trial beyond my strength! And isn't it something, my love, to be together as we are now for the last few weeks and days? You don't know how happy it makes me to see you and papa getting on so nicely as you do. Isn't he nice, now? I don't believe he thinks a bit the worse of you for being a Catholic. We shall all meet again, darling—shall we not?—in the same heaven, and then we shall have the same perfect knowledge, and our errors and differences will be at an end for ever."

She was a good deal exhausted with saying this, and leaned back in her chair, closing her eyes for a while. Philip gradually recovered his usual melancholy tranquillity, and they sat thus without speaking, he holding both her hands in his, and gently chafing and caressing them. He had not courage to speak to Alice—indeed, in all their saddest and most serious conversations, the courage was mainly on her side.

Whilst they were sitting thus, the sky became suddenly overcast, and there came a few pattering drops of rain. Alice started suddenly, and seemed to be agitated by an unknown terror. She grasped Philip's hand in a nervous way, and

complained of a strange suffering and foreboding. "I felt so calm and peaceful all the morning," she said; "I wish I could feel so now."

The agitation increased, and it was evident to Philip that a great change had taken place. Alice threw her arms round him, and clasped him to her. "O Philip!" she cried, wildly, "don't leave me now—don't leave me even for a minute! Stay, darling, stay; it is coming, coming!"

The pattering of the rain had ceased. It had been nothing but a few drops—scarcely even a shower—and it had ceased.

But the air was not clearer after the rain. On the contrary, it had been clearer before it than it was now. The snowy summit of Mount Ventoux was hidden in an opaque, thick atmosphere; mist it was not, as we northerns understand mist, but a substantial thickening of the air.

Soon there was the same thickening, the same opacity in the atmosphere of the remote plain that stretched to the mountain's foot. It was invisible now, the Mount Ventoux, the Mountain of the Winds.

And as the plain grew dark the Rhone as suddenly whitened. It whitened and whitened, nearer and nearer Avignon; then a dull distant roar became audible, steadily increasing. A vio-

lent brief squall shook the villa. What! so frightened already? Poor children, it is nothing yet!

Over the terrified plain, over the foaming river, comes the MISTRAL, careering in his strength! Well for you, walls of Avignon, that you were built for the shocks of battle! well for thee, most especially, O palace of the transplanted Papacy, that thy fortress-heights were erected less for pleasure than for resistance!

Louder and louder, nearer and nearer! How the trees bend like fishing-rods! Crash, crash—they break before the tempest. What a clatter against the windows! It is a volley of pebbles that the Mistral carries with it as a torrent does. Bang, bang—the shutters are torn off their iron hinges and pitched nobody knows where—into the court, on the roof-top, it may be, or into the neighbour's garden!

The intensity of the noise made all human voices inaudible. The Mistral likes to make an uproar—it is his amusement, when he comes to Avignon from his mountain. And he whistles at once in a thousand chimneys, as a boy whistles in two steel keys; and he makes such a clatter with destroying things, that the most insured house-property leaves no peace to its possessor.

But straight in the midst of his path rise the towers of the fortress-palace, and Peter Obreri, its architect, knows in the world of spirits that they resist the Mistral yet.

But alas for our poor little Alice! This wind does not suit her at all; this unceasing, this wearisome wind—this agitating, terrible wind! She did not fear death before, in the calm serene weather, when it seemed that her soul might rise in the blue ether, and be borne by floating angels. But to go out into the bleak, stern tempest—to leave *his* encircling arms, and be dashed no one knows whither along the desolate, unfamiliar Provence, with twigs, and dead leaves, and pebbles, and that choking cloud of sand!

"Forgive me these foolish fancies," she prayed, from the depths of this horror. "My soul knows her way to the haven of thy rest, O Lord, my Guide and my Redeemer!"

CHAPTER VII.

Early in the month of February, amongst the letters for Arkwright Lodge there came a black-edged one for Miss Anison, with an orange French stamp in the corner.

"My dear Miss Anison,—Though no doubt you are quite prepared to receive the sad news I have to tell, it will still deeply grieve you. Our poor Alice died early this morning, after a week of much agitation and suffering, caused by the prevalence of the *Mistral*—a violent wind to which Avignon is sometimes exposed. I am thankful, however, to say that her last day in this world was one of great calm and peace. The wind had abated, and the quiet which succeeded to it was delightful to Alice. She did not appear to suffer during the whole of yesterday; and when she died this morning, it was very

quietly. Mr Stedman bears up better than I had expected. Dear Alice told me to give her love to you all at Arkwright Lodge when I wrote to tell you of her death, and she begged me especially to say to Mrs Anison how grateful she felt for all Mrs Anison's kindnesses to her during her life. With kind regards to Mr and Mrs Anison and the young ladies, I remain, yours most sincerely, PHILIP STANBURNE.

"P.S.—We intend to return to England almost immediately. Alice desired me to give many little things to her friends at Arkwright Lodge in remembrance of her."

This letter was handed round the breakfast-table, for nobody felt inclined to read it aloud. The only dry eyes at the table were those of Margaret and her father, and he was as near crying as a stoical Englishman likes to be. The rest of the meal was both short and sad, and hardly a word was spoken.

When breakfast was over, Margaret went into her own room, and the very first thing she did was to open her little rosewood desk, and indite the following letter to Mr Jacob Ogden, Milend, Shayton :—

"My dear Mr Ogden,—I have been reflecting seriously during the last few days on the subject of our engagement, and I will tell you what conclusions I have come to. You will admit yourself, that, for a lover, you have shown very little *empressement*. You have been here, on the whole, very little since our engagement began; you have always preferred 'business' of any kind to being with me; and on some occasions, when you had positively promised me to come, you have gone elsewhere to get your favourite amusement of shooting. At first you used to write and express some regret for breaking your promises in this way; but now you do not think it any longer necessary. For instance, you positively promised to be here last Wednesday, and you neither wrote nor came, nor have you written since to offer any explanation. If you behave in this way as a lover, what would you do as a husband? I tremble to think of the life I might have led with you if I had not put you to the test of a longer engagement than you were willing to go through. And now I write to say that our engagement is broken off, not by me, though I first say the word, but by your unkind negligence. Your presents will be duly returned.—I remain, ever yours very faithfully, Margaret Anison."

The accusations in this letter were perfectly well founded, though it is quite certain that they would never have been made if Philip Stanburne's communication had been edged with silver instead of black. Margaret Anison had remarked with secret satisfaction that Jacob Ogden's behaviour as a lover gave her good reasons for retreating from her engagement, whenever she might determine on that decisive step; but in the meanwhile she had never reproached him with it, had never appeared aware of it when he *did* come, but always received him in the same uniformly gracious way, as if he had been the most assiduous of adorers. She had kept this accusation of negligence to be used against him whenever it might be convenient to throw the blame of a rupture upon *him;* but if she had finally decided to marry him, this and all other faults would have been affectionately overlooked. It had been highly convenient to let him sink deeper and deeper in that sin of negligence, till at last, from mere carelessness and an aversion to all letter-writing that was not upon business, he had actually reached that depth in crime that he no longer observed the common forms of society, and did not even write a line of apology or excuse. Margaret never expected him to be attentive to her

as a husband: she intended to spend his money, and, so long as that was forthcoming, cared little about Jacob Ogden's manners. But it was charming to be able to back out of her engagement, now that Alice was dead, and do it in a dignified and honourable manner. For of all sins that a lover can commit, the chief is the sin of neglect; and in this case any competent and just jury would have pronounced the verdict, "guilty."

To this letter Jacob Ogden made no reply. His feelings on receiving it were, first, the most unfeigned astonishment (for he thought he had been very attentive, and that "courtin'" had absorbed far too much of his time); next, a paroxysm of indignation, with a sense of injury; and then, when this subsided, a sense of relief so exquisite, so delicious, and so complete, that nobody can have any idea of it unless at some period of his existence a wearing and persistent anxiety has been suddenly removed for ever. The love of Margaret Anison had been one of those masterful passions which sometimes force the most prudent men to folly. He had made his offer in the height of this temporary insanity, but after the engagement had been entered upon, his old self had gradually returned; and though he was fully determined to "go through with it," as a business

which had to be done, he by no means looked forward to the conjugal state as an improvement upon his accustomed life. It was like embarking on an unknown and perilous sea, in utter ignorance of the art of navigation, and that sea might be a sea of troubles. The complex details of married life, its endless little duties, were perplexing to a man whose time and thoughts were already taken up by the government of a heavy business, and the care of an increasing estate. And now to escape from these new and unfamiliar troubles—to remain in the old quiet life at Milend—to have full control over his own expenditure, with no female criticism or interference—to see his fortune growing and growing without sons to establish or daughters to dower, or an expensive houseful of servants to eat the bank-notes in his pocket-book like so many nattering mice,—ah! it was sweet to him to think of this in his innermost and sincerest self! He had loved his bachelor life well enough before, but he had never felt the full luxury of its independence as he did now!

Jacob Ogden enjoyed a privilege highly favourable to happiness, but not so favourable to moral or intellectual growth. He lived at peace with himself, and looking back on his life, he approved of its whole course, with the single exception of

that hour of folly at Whittlecup. He felt and believed that no man could be wiser or more perfect than he was. When he humbly called his faculties "common-sense," he by no means understood the word as meaning a sense which he had in common with others, but rather a special faculty, to himself vouchsafed by the bounteous gift of nature. He lived in absolute independence of the good opinion of others, because his mind was at peace with itself—because he always manfully did to-day what he was sure to approve to-morrow, or ten years after to-morrow. Am I painting the portrait of a man of pre-eminent virtue? Not exactly, but of a man who would have been pre-eminently virtuous, or pre-eminently learned, if virtue or knowledge had been his ideal. For he had a manly resolution, a steady unflinching determination, to live up to the standard which he fixed for himself. And the inward peace which he enjoyed was due to his obedience to the laws of his own nature, which thus ever remained in harmony with itself in serene strength and efficiency.

This peace had for a while been lost to him, and he had felt a strange change and diminution in the inward satisfactions. His communings with himself had lost their old sweetness, and he

no longer masticated the cud of contentment in the fair pastures of reflection and imagination. To go back to those happy pastures once more—to chew that sweet cud again, after months of privation—what a deep, strengthening, cheering, encouraging, replenishing delight it was!

Yet there was one drawback to the plenitude of Ogden's happiness, even though he had escaped the misery of the wedding-day. That new mansion had been begun, he had spent £400 upon it already, and spoilt a pretty meadow, and he had spent some money on presents for Margaret—not very much, for his ideas on the subject of gift-making were not very large ideas, yet still enough to plague and torment him, for the loss of a sovereign would do that. To be jilted did not trouble him much, but to have been cheated into wasting his money! that thought would not let him rest. It followed and harassed him wherever he went, and somehow it was the cause of the following letter, which was received by Mr Joseph Anison:—

"Sir,—I am instructed by my client, Mr Jacob Ogden, to lay before you the following statement of facts. Your daughter, Miss Margaret Anison, by a letter bearing date ——, and which is in

our possession, accepted his proposal of marriage, and promised marriage; which promise she now, by a letter bearing date ——, refuses to execute. In consequence of her promise, and in conformity with her desires, our client has been led into considerable expense, especially in the erection of a mansion, of which Miss Anison herself selected the site. The works were immediately stopped when it became known to our client that Miss Anison had determined upon a breach of promise, but a heavy sum had been already expended, which, so far as our client is concerned, is money utterly thrown away. We beg to call your attention to the fact that our client and his mother offered another most commodious and suitable residence to Miss Anison, situated at Milend, and that she declined this, and induced our client to commence the erection of a new and costly mansion on a site which he would never have selected for himself. We therefore claim for our client damages to the amount of one thousand pounds (£1000), and beg to inform you, that unless this sum is paid before the expiration of one calendar month from this date, we shall institute a suit for breach of promise of marriage, and claim damages on that score to a far heavier amount. The present claim, we desire it to be

understood, is not made on the ground of breach of promise, but is merely a claim for compensation on account of outlay which our client has been induced to incur. Our client has no desire to push matters to the extremity of a public exposure, but will not shrink from doing so if his present just claim is refused.—I am, sir, your obedient servant, JONAS HANBY."

"You may decide for yourself, Margaret," said Mr Anison, "whether you prefer that I should pay this out of your fortune, or stand an action for breach of promise. It is not usual to bring actions of this sort against women, but Ogden is a most determined fellow, and he doesn't care much for what people may say. He will bring his action if we don't send him a cheque, and I don't think such an action would be very pleasant to you. Considering circumstances, too, especially the building of that new house, I am inclined to think that he would get rather heavy damages, certainly at least as much as he is asking for. Such an action would make a tremendous noise, and we should be in all the newspapers. We must consider your sisters, too, who wouldn't be much benefited by publicity of this kind. In short, my advice is to send the cheque."

The cheque was accordingly sent to Mr Hanby, and duly acknowledged. The presents had been returned a few days before. These last had been purchased of a jeweller in St Ann's Square, Manchester, who took them back in exchange for an excellent gentleman's watch and a big cameo brooch. The watch went into Jacob Ogden's own fob, and the brooch adorned his already sufficiently ornamented mother. All things considered, Jacob Ogden now felt that he could look back upon the whole business with a mind at ease. He had done his duty by himself. After deducting the outlay on the house, and the outlay necessary for restoring the field to its pristine verdure, he found that there remained to him a clear surplus of four hundred and fifteen pounds seven shillings and twopence, which he entered in the column of profits. "It's been rather a good business for once, has this courtin'," said Jacob to himself; "but it's devilish risky, and there's nobody 'll catch me at it again. If she'd nobbut stuck to me, she'd 'ave wenly ruined me."

So, when the walls of the mansion that was to have been were levelled with the ground, and the foundations buried under the earth that they might be no more seen, Jacob Ogden buried with them the thought and idea of marriage; and the

grass grew on the field that had been so torn, and cut, and burdened, and disturbed by the masons and labourers that had been there.

As the field grew level and green again just as it used to be, so flourished the mind of Jacob Ogden in serene and productive life. But as *beneath* the field—beneath the waving of the rich grass—there still lay the plan of the house that was to have been, traced out in stony foundations, so in the mind of its owner there lay hidden a stony memory of the plans of this strange year; and though the surface was perfectly restored, there were hard places under his happiness that had not been there before.

CHAPTER VIII.

The rupture between Jacob Ogden and Miss Anison had an immediate effect upon the fortunes of a young friend of ours, who has for a long time been very much in the background. Little Jacob began to occupy a larger and larger place in his uncle's thoughts. For, though uncle Jacob had formerly always intended, in a general way, to remain a bachelor, this had been nothing more than a sort of intellectual preference for bachelorhood, deduced from his general views of life, and especially from his dominant anxiety to make a fortune. But his objections to matrimony were no longer of this mild kind. Like a wild animal that has once felt the noose of the trapper round its neck, and yet succeeded in freeing itself, he had conceived a horror of the snare which was incomparably more active and intense than the vague alarms of the inexperienced. His former ideas

about marriage had been purely negative. He had no intention to marry, and there was the end of his reflections on the matter. But now his preference for celibacy had taken the shape of a passionate and unalterable resolution.

The increase of his fortune, which might henceforth be surely relied on, led him to think a good deal about the little boy at Twistle Farm, who was most probably destined to inherit it; and he determined to use a legitimate influence over his brother Isaac, so that little Jacob might be educated in a manner suitable to his future position.

We have said that Jacob Ogden was perfectly satisfied with himself, and that knowledge was not his ideal. But although this is true, his views were really larger than the reader may have hitherto suspected. He considered himself perfect in his place; but as little Jacob would probably have a very different place in the world, he would need different perfections. The qualities needed for making a large fortune were, in Jacob Ogden's view, the finest qualities that a human being can possess, and he knew that he possessed them; but then there were certain ornaments and accomplishments which were necessary to a rich gentleman, and which the manufacturer had not had time to acquire. He was not foolish enough

to torment himself with regrets that he did not know Latin and Greek; he had none of the silly humilities of weak minds that are perpetually regretting their "deficiencies." Whatever it was necessary for his main purpose that he should know, he always resolutely set himself to learn, and, by strenuous application, mastered; what was unnecessary for his purpose, he remained contentedly ignorant about. The customary pedantries of the world, its shallow pretension to scholarship, never humiliated *him*. He suspected, perhaps, that genuine classical acquirement was much rarer than the varnish of pseudo-scholarship, and he had not that deferential faith in gentlemen's Latin and Greek which is sometimes found in the uneducated. But, on the other hand, as he had learned everything that was necessary to a plodding Shayton cotton-spinner, so he was determined that little Jacob should learn everything necessary to a perfect English gentleman. He had not read the sentence of Emerson, "We like to see everything do its office after its kind, whether it be a milk-cow or a rattlesnake;" but the sentiment in it was his own. His strong sense perceived that so long as men hold different situations in the world, their preparatory training must be different; and that, as a young pigeon

must learn to fly, and a young terrier to catch rats, so the youthful heir of a splendid fortune, and the boy who has his fortune to make, ought to receive respectively a celestial and a terrestrial training.

For Jacob Ogden, himself a terrestrial, knew that there was a heaven above him—the heaven of aristocracy! *There* dwelt superior beings, in golden houses, like gods together, far above the ill-used race of men that cleave the soil and store their yearly dues. There is something ludicrous, if it were not pathetic and painful, in the self-abasement of a man so strong and resolute as Ogden before a heaven whose saints and angels were only titled ladies and gentlemen, mainly occupied in amusing themselves; but to him it was the World of the Ideal. And this religion had one great advantage—it kept him a little humbler than he ever would have been without it. Great was the successful cotton-spinner in his eyes, but there were beings cast by nature in a nobler mould. For Jacob Ogden actually believed, in all sincerity and simplicity, that there was the same natural difference between a lord and a plebeian that there is between a thorough-bred and a cart-horse. This superstition, though founded on a dim sense of the natural differences

which do exist, erred in making them the obedient servants of the artificial differences. There are, no doubt, thorough-breds and cart-horses amongst mankind, and the popular phraseology would imply that there are also asses; but these natural differences seem to be independent of title altogether, and dependent even upon fortune only so far as it may help or hinder their development. The superstition that lords, *quâ* lords, are wiser, and better, and braver, and more respectable than other people, was more prevalent in Shayton than it is in places where lords are more frequently seen. Jacob Ogden, for instance, had never seen a lord in his life before he went to the luncheon at Wenderholme; and so perfect is the division of classes in the manufacturing districts, that he had never spoken even to an Honourable.

Now, with this deeply-rooted Anglican superstition about the heaven of aristocracy and the angels that dwell therein, uncle Jacob naturally desired that his nephew should be qualified for admission there. And he had a devout belief that the states of probation for a young soul aspiring to celestial bliss were terms of residence at Eton and at Oxford.

Little Jacob had continued his custom of staying at Milend every Sunday, that he might bene-

fit by the services of our friend Mr Prigley in the pew at Shayton Church. Isaac Ogden, though he had come to church three Sundays in succession after the recovery of little Jacob, and had attended divine service regularly as an officer of militia (being in that character compulsible thereunto by martial law), had, I regret to say, relapsed into his old habits of negligence at Twistle Farm, and spent the Sunday there in following his own devices. It must be admitted, however, that he did little harm, on that day or any other, to himself or anybody else. He remained religiously faithful to his vow of total abstinence, and spent several hours every day in giving a sound elementary education to his son.

"I'll tell you what it is, Isaac," said uncle Jacob one day when his elder brother had come on one of his rare visits to Milend—"I'll tell you what it is; if you'll just let me have my own way about th' eddication o' th' young un, I'll leave him all my brass, and, what's more, I don't mind payin' for his schoolin' beside. I want nowt nobbut what's reet, but I'll make sich a gentleman on him as there isn't i' o Shayton nor i' o Manchester nother. And to start wi', I reckon nowt of his stoppin' up at Twistle Farm same as he is doin', an' idlin' away auve* his time. Let

* Half.

him live at Milend regular for a twelvemonth, and go to Prigley six hour every day, and then send him to Eton—that's where gentlefolk sends their lads to. And afther that, we'll send him to Hoxford College."

Isaac Ogden made sundry objections, mere feints to conceal his real objection, the difficulty in parting from his son. Since he had become a teetotaller his nervous system had been incomparably less irritable, and he was able to teach little Jacob with patience and even pleasure. A strong and mutual affection bound the father and the little boy. They passed the winter evenings together in the solitude of Twistle Farm, the child happy with his book, the father earnestly striving to fill the voids in his own defective education. What a heaven it seemed to little Jacob after the wearing dread and anxiety, the undeserved anger, ever imminent, the scornful unfeeling cruelty that made his young life miserable when last the snow was on the ground! Isaac Ogden's present kindness and gently paternal ways were the more endearing from this effect of contrast.

That night, when Isaac returned to the Twistle Farm, he sat sadly by the fire, and after a long pause of silence, called little Jacob to his side

"Come here, my boy," he said; and when the child came, he put his arm round him, and so held him, saying nothing. The child leaned against his father, and looked up wonderingly in his face. Seeing a new sort of expression there, he felt—not exactly alarmed, for he never dreaded his father now, but a little puzzled and a little repressed, so that it made him very quiet. They remained in this way several minutes, and little Jacob began to have some of the uneasy feelings of a kitten when you keep it on your knee with hands which, though gentle and caressing, it feels to be irresistible.

At last Isaac changed his attitude a little and looked straight at his boy, whilst he began to stroke his hair. "My lad," he said, "do you love your father?"

For answer, little Jacob climbed on his knee and gave him a hearty kiss.

"Do you like living here with your father at Twistle Farm? You've nobody to play with, Jacob."

"Yes, but I have, papa. Isn't skating playing? and we skated all yesterday on the pond; and isn't snowballing playing, too? and *didn't* I pepper you, that's all. And you said we should make a snow-house to-morrow like the Esqui-

maux. May I sleep in it all night when it's made? The Esquimaux sleep in their snow-houses, and they're not cold in them either, papa. Wouldn't it be jolly to sleep in a snow-house?"

"Well, lad, we must make the snow-house to-morrow, as I promised it you; but you must have other companions soon. You are going to school in a year; and you must go and live at Milend now, and work every day with Mr Prigley."

"Am I to go very soon, papa?"

"Yes, lad. I saw Mr Prigley to-day, and we have made our arrangements. You will go to the parsonage every morning at nine, and come back to your grandmother's at five. You will eat your dinner at the parsonage."

"And where am I to go to school afterwards, papa?"

"To a very big school near London, called Eton."

"Oh! I know, papa. It's part of the Queen's castle; for there's Eton College and Windsor Castle on the back of my copybook, and it says that Windsor Castle is where the Queen lives. Do all the princes go to school there?"

"No; but many young lords do."

The next day was the last of little Jacob's un-

interrupted life at Twistle Farm. The snow-house was built. To accumulate the necessary materials, huge snowballs were made by rolling snow downhill; and when there was a sufficiency of these, they were sawn into beautiful blocks, whiter than the stones of a marble palace. The edifice was soon completed, and little Jacob pronounced it magnificent—he, at least, having the privilege of standing erect therein.

The snow-house remained for a whole week after little Jacob's departure from Twistle Farm, and Isaac Ogden looked upon it with feelings of a tender melancholy, which none but parents equally fond and foolish can realise. Saddest of all was he in the long lonely evenings, for the child had been better company for him than he had been aware of. In former years he would have consoled himself in the companionship of the brandy-bottle; but as that old friend and he had broken off all intercourse, Isaac Ogden took to reading instead, which had now become easy and agreeable to him.

CHAPTER IX.

No sooner had Mr Prigley got into the full swing of work with his young pupil, than he received a letter from our friend Colonel Stanburne of Wenderholme.

"My dear Mr Prigley,—It would give me great pleasure, and be of great use to me besides, if you could come over here and stay with me for a fortnight or three weeks. We got the house covered in just before the winter, and the works have been going forward since in some parts of the interior, but there are some points about internal fittings, especially in the principal rooms, that I and my architect don't agree about. Now, what I most want is, the advice of a competent unprofessional friend; and as I know that you have studied architecture much more deeply than I have ever done myself, I look to you to help

me. It will probably be a long time before the house is finished, but now is the time to decide about the interior arrangements. Helena is at Lord Adisham's, and so I am left alone with the architect. I wish you would come. He seems to want me to adopt a different style for the finishing of the interior to that which was generally prevalent when Wenderholme was built. Now my notion is (*puisque l'occasion se présente*), to make the place as homogeneous as possible.

"Do come. You will stay here at the Cottage. I am living with my mother.—Very faithfully yours, JOHN STANBURNE."

To this letter, which offered to Mr Prigley's mind the most tempting of all possible baits, for he dearly loved to dabble in architecture and restorations, the reverend gentleman, being bound by his engagement with the Ogdens, could only regretfully answer :—

"MY DEAR COLONEL STANBURNE,—I should have accepted your kind invitation with the greatest pleasure, and the more so that I take a deep interest in the restoration of your noble old mansion, but unfortunately I have a private pupil

whom I cannot leave. It is young Jacob Ogden, whose father is one of your militia officers.—Yours most truly, E. PRIGLEY."

But by return of post Mr Prigley got the following short reply:—

"MY DEAR MR PRIGLEY,—The best solution of the difficulty will be, to bring little Jacob with you. I know little Jacob very well, and he knows me. Give my compliments to his father if you have to ask his permission, and tell him we will take good care of his little boy,—Yours very faithfully, J. STANBURNE."

So the end of it was, that little Jacob found himself suddenly removed to Wenderholme Cottage, where old Mrs Stanburne lived. The change was highly agreeable to him—not the less agreeable that the companion of his leisure hours was the beautiful little Edith.

CHAPTER X.

Wenderholme Cottage was in fact a very comfortable and commodious house. Its claims to the humble title which it bore, were, first, that its front was all gables, with projecting roofs, and carved or traceried barge-boards; and, secondly, that its rooms were small. But if they were small they were numerous; and when it pleased Mrs Stanburne to receive visitors—and it often pleased that hospitable lady so to do—it was astonishing how many people the Cottage could be made to hold.

A little kindness soon wins the affections of a child, and little Jacob had not been more than three or four days at Wenderholme before he began to be very fond of Mrs Stanburne. Hers was just the sort of influence which is necessary to a young gentleman at that age—the influence

of a woman of experience, who is at the same time a high-bred gentlewoman. No doubt his old grandmother loved little Jacob more than anything else in the world; but she was narrow-minded, and despotic, and vulgar in all her ways. Mrs Ogden, too, had moments of caprice and violence, in which she was dangerous to oppose, and difficult to pacify; in short, she was one of those persons, too common in her class, of whom Matthew Arnold says that they are deficient in sweetness and light. The steady unfailing goodness of Mrs Stanburne, her uniformly gentle manners, her open intelligent sympathy, produced on her young guest an effect made ten times more powerful by all his early associations. It was like coming out of a chamber where everything was rough and uncouth, into a pleasant drawing-room, full of light and elegance, where there are flowers, and music, and books. Such a change would not be agreeable to every one: whether it would be agreeable or not depends upon the instinctive preferences. Ladies like Mrs Stanburne do not put everybody at his ease, and it proves much in little Jacob's favour that he felt happy in her presence. As Jacob Ogden, the elder, had been formed by nature for the rude contest with reluctant fortune, so his nephew had been created

for the refinements of an attained civilisation. Therefore, henceforth, though he still loved his grandmother, both from gratitude and habit, his young mind saw clearly that neither her precepts nor her example were to be accepted as authoritative, and he looked up to Mrs Stanburne as his preceptress.

Little Jacob's healthy honest face and simple manners recommended him to the good lady from the first, and he had not been a week under her roof before she took a kind interest in everything concerning him. The mere facts that he had no mother, no sister, no brother, and that he had lived alone with his father in such a place as Twistle Farm, were of themselves enough to attract attention and awaken curiosity; but the story of his arrival at Wenderholme in the preceding winter was also known to her, and she knew how unendurably miserable his lonely home had been. Mrs Stanburne talked a good deal with Mr Prigley about the boy, and learned with pleasure his father's wonderful and (as now might be hoped) permanent reformation.

"He does not seem to have neglected the little boy," she said; "he reads very well. I asked him to read aloud to me yesterday, and was surprised to hear how well he read—I mean, quite as if he

understood it, and not in the sing-song way children often acquire."

"He's ten years old now, and he ought to read well," replied Mr Prigley; "but he knows a great deal for a boy of his age. It's high time to send him to school, though; it's too lonely for him at the farm. I am preparing him for Eton."

Mrs Stanburne expressed some surprise at this. "Boys in his rank in life don't often go to Eton, do they, Mr Prigley?"

The clergyman smiled as he answered that little Jacob's rank in life was not yet definitively settled. Mrs Stanburne replied that she thought it was, since his father was a retired tradesman.

"Yes, but his uncle, Mr Jacob Ogden of Milend, has not left business; indeed he is greatly extending his business just now, for he has built an immense new factory. And this little boy is to be his heir—his uncle told me so himself three weeks since. This child will be a rich man—nobody can tell how rich. His uncle wishes him to be educated as a gentleman."

It is a great recommendation to a little boy to be heir to a large fortune, and Mrs Stanburne's natural liking for little Jacob was by no means diminished by a knowledge of that fact. As he was going to Eton, too, she began to look upon

him as already in her own rank of life, where boys were sent to Eton, and inherited extensive estates.

During Mr Prigley's frequent absences with Colonel Stanburne at the Hall, Mrs Stanburne undertook to hear little Jacob his lessons, and then the idea struck her that Jacob and Edith might both write together from her dictation. In this way the boy and the girl became class-fellows. Edith had a governess usually, but the governess had gone to visit her relations, and Miss Edith's education was for the present under the superintendence of her grandmamma.

So between these two children an intimacy rapidly established itself—an intimacy which affected the course of their whole lives.

One day when they had been left alone together in the drawing-room, little Jacob asked the young lady some question, and he began by calling her "Miss Edith."

"Miss Edith!" said she, pouting; "why do you call me Miss? The servants may call me Miss, but you mayn't. We're school-fellows now, and you must call me Edith. And I shall call you Jacob. Why haven't you got a prettier name for me to call you by? Jacob isn't pretty at all. Haven't you another name?"

Poor little Jacob was obliged to confess his poverty in names. He had but one, and that one uncouth and unacceptable!

"Only one name. Why, you funny little boy, only to have one name! I've got four. I'm called Edith Maud Charlotte Elizabeth. But I'll tell you what I'll do. As I've got four names and you've only one, I'll give you one of mine. I can't call you Charlotte, you know, because you're not a girl; but I can call you Charley, and I always will do. So now I begin. Charley, come here!"

Little Jacob approached obediently.

"Ha, ha! he answers to his new name already!" she cried in delight, clapping her hands. "What a clever little boy he is! He's a deal cleverer than the pony was when we changed *its* name! But then, to be sure, the pony never properly knew its first name either."

Suddenly she became grave, and put her fingers on the young gentleman's arm. "Charley," she said, "this must be a secret between us two, because if grandmamma found out, she might be angry with me, you know. But you like to be called Charley, don't you? isn't it nice?"

CHAPTER XI.

The London architect who was charged with the restoration of Wenderholme gave advice which could not be followed without a heavy outlay; but in this respect he was surpassed by Colonel Stanburne's amateur adviser, Mr Prigley, whose imagination revelled in the splendours of an ideal Elizabethan interior, full of carving and tapestry, and all manner of barbaric magnificence. Where the architect would have been content with paper, Mr Prigley insisted upon wainscot; and where the architect admitted plain panelling, the clergyman would have it carved in fanciful little arches, or imitations of folded napkins, or shields of arms, or large medallion portraits of the kings of England, or bas-reliefs of history or the chase.

Only consider what Mr Prigley's tastes and circumstances had been, and what a painful contradiction had ever subsisted between them! He

had an intense passion for art—not for painting or sculpture in their independent form, for of these he knew little—but Mr Prigley loved architecture mainly, and then all the other arts as they could help the effect of architecture. With these tastes he lived in a degree of poverty which utterly forbade any practical realisation of them, and surrounded by buildings of which it is enough to say that they represented the taste of the inhabitants of Shayton. The ugliest towns in the world are English towns—the ugliest towns in England are in the manufacturing district—the ugliest town in the manufacturing district was the one consigned to Mr Prigley's spiritual care. Here his artistic tastes dwelt in a state of suppression, like Jack-in-the-box. Colonel Stanburne had imprudently unfastened the lid; it flew open, and Jack sprang up with a suddenness and an energy that was positively startling and alarming.

The fact is, Mr Prigley lived in a condition of intoxication during the whole time of his stay at Wenderholme Cottage—an intoxication just as real as that which he denounced in Seth Schofield and Jerry Smethurst, and the other patrons of the Red Lion. A man may get tipsy on other things than ale or brandy; and it may be doubted whether any tipsiness is more complete, or more

enjoyable whilst it lasts, than that which attends the realisation of our ideas and the gratification of our tastes. And it has been kindly ordained that when we are not rich enough to realise our ideas for ourselves, we take nearly as much interest in seeing them realised by somebody else; so that critics who could not afford to build a labourer's cottage, get impassioned about Prince Albert's monument or the future Palace of Justice. How much the more, then, should Mr Prigley excite himself about Wenderholme, especially seeing that Colonel Stanburne had done him the honour to consult his judgment, and expressed the desire to benefit by his extensive knowledge, his cultivated taste! Was it not a positive duty to interest himself in the matter, and to give the best advice he could? It was a duty, and it was a pleasure.

Mr Prigley had already half decided the Colonel, when a powerful ally came unexpectedly to his assistance. One morning at breakfast-time, when the Colonel read his letters, he said to Mrs Stanburne, "Here's a letter from an acquaintance of ours who wants to come and stay here," and he handed her the following note:—

"My dear Colonel Stanburne,—Since I had

the pleasure of seeing you at Wenderholme, I have often thought about what you are doing there. Having had a good deal of experience with architects, restorations, &c., it has occurred to me that I might be of some use. Would you present my compliments to Mrs Stanburne, and say that if it occasioned no inconvenience to her, I should very much like to spend a few days at Wenderholme Cottage? I would bring nobody with me except Thompson, my valet; and though our acquaintance is comparatively a recent one, I presume upon it so far as to hope that you will not allow my visit to make any difference—I mean, in asking people to meet me. I should like, on the contrary, to have you all to myself, so that we may talk about the restoration of Wenderholme in detail: it interests me greatly. With kind compliments to Mrs Stanburne,—yours very truly, INGLEBOROUGH."

"Well, dear," said Mrs Stanburne, when she had read the note, "the Duke must come, of course. I like him very much—he is a very agreeable man. We needn't make any fuss."

So the Duke came; and as Colonel Stanburne had insisted that Mr Prigley should stay to meet him, he and little Jacob prolonged their visit at

the Cottage. "I look upon you, Mr Prigley, as a necessary shield for my ignorance. Whenever you see that the Duke is puzzling me, you must divert the attack by drawing it on yourself. *You're* a match for him — you know all the technical terms."

His Grace brought with him a heavy box of books, such as made Mr Prigley's mouth water, and several portfolios of original designs for carvings, which had been executed for an old mansion of his own, contemporary with Wenderholme. He warmly supported Mr Prigley's views; and in the long conversations which the three held together in the evenings, whilst the Colonel consumed his habitual allowance of tobacco, the books and portfolios were triumphantly appealed to, and it was proved in a conclusive manner that this thing ought to be done, and that this other thing was absolutely indispensable, till poor John Stanburne hardly knew what to think.

"It is an opportunity," said the Duke—"an opportunity such as, we hope, may never occur again; and it rests with you, Colonel Stanburne, whether your noble old mansion is to be restored, in the genuine sense of the word, so that it may have once again the perfect character of an Elizabethan house of the best class—or whether it is

to be simply repaired so as to shelter you from the weather, like any other house in the neighbourhood. You will never repent a liberal expenditure at the right moment. I say, be liberal now; it is an expense which will not occur twice, either in your lifetime or in that of your descendants for many generations. What are a few thousand pounds more or less in a matter of such importance? Make Wenderholme a perfect mansion of its kind. Restore all the wainscot, and tapestry, and glass; replace all the carved furniture that must have been there in Queen Elizabeth's time——"

"Thanks to Eureton's good management the night of the fire, all our furniture is safe."

The Duke made a little gesture of impatience. "Captain Eureton," he said, "did his duty most creditably on the night of the fire; but as the fire originated in the garrets, where all the old remnants were accumulated, the consequence was, that the most precious things in the house were destroyed, and the less precious were preserved."

"A good deal more useful, though, Duke, if less precious in the eyes of an antiquary."

"Useful? Yes, that is what makes them so dangerous. People admit incongruous things into their houses on the wretched pretext of util-

ity. Do you know, in my opinion, it is a subject of regret that the furniture was saved that night."

"You worked very hard yourself in saving it."

"Of course, it was my duty to take my share of the work; but circumstances will sometimes place us in such a position that duty compels us to act against what we believe to be the general interest of mankind. For instance, suppose I were out at sea in my yacht, and that I met with a boatful of Republicans, such as Mazzini, Garibaldi, Louis Blanc, and Ledru Rollin, all so hungry that they were just going to eat each other up, and so thirsty that they were just going to drink salt water and go raving mad, it would be my duty to pick up the rascals, and give them food, and land them on some hospitable shore, and I should do so because to save men from death is an elementary duty; but I should be rendering a far better service to mankind in letting the fellows eat each other, instead of assassinating their betters, and go raving mad out at sea rather than disseminate insane doctrines on the land."

The Colonel could not help laughing at this sally. "Do you mean to compare my furniture with a set of Republicans?"

"What Radicals and Republicans are in an ancient state, commonplace and ignoble furniture is in a fine old mansion; and your old remnants in the lumber-room were like men of refined education and ancient descent, who have been thrust out of their natural place in society to make room for vulgar *parvenus*."

"Well, but what on earth would you have me do with my furniture?"

"There are many ways of getting it out of Wenderholme. Why not furnish some other house with it? Why don't you have a house in London? you *ought* to have a house in London. The furniture here is quite appropriate in a modern house, though it is incongruous in an old one. Or if you had a modern house anywhere, no matter where, you might furnish it with that furniture, and then Wenderholme would be free to receive things suitable for it."

Amongst other books that the Duke had brought with him was Viollet-le-Duc's valuable and comprehensive 'Dictionnaire du Mobilier;' and the three gentlemen were soon as deep in the study of chairs and *bahuts* as they had before been in that of wainscots and stained glass. Colonel Stanburne was not by nature an enthusiast in matters of this kind, and would have lived

calmly all his life amidst the incongruities of the Wenderholme of his youth; but nobody knows, until he has been exposed to infection, whether he may not catch some enthusiasm from others which never would have originated in himself. From the very beginning of his stay, Mr Prigley had begun to indoctrinate John Stanburne in these matters; and after the arrival of the Duke's richly-illustrated volumes, the pupil's progress had been remarkable for its rapidity. He now felt thoroughly persuaded that it would be wrong to miss such a rare opportunity, and that economy at such a moment would be unworthy of the owner of Wenderholme. He had a large sum of money in the Funds, entirely under his own control, and he resolved to appropriate a portion of this to the restoration of the mansion, in accordance with the advice of the Duke and Mr Prigley.

One day at lunch, his Grace was lamenting the loss of the old carvings in the lumber-room, when little Jacob, who dined when his elders lunched, and was usually a model of good behaviour, in that he observed a Trappistine silence during the repast, rather astonished the company by saying, "Please, I know where there's plenty of old oak."

The gentlemen took this for one of those re-

marks, usually so little to the point, which children are in the habit of making. Mrs Stanburne kindly answered by inquiring "whether there was much old oak at Twistle Farm?"

"Oh no, I don't mean at papa's—I mean here," replied little Jacob, with great vivacity. John Stanburne said, "There used to be plenty, my boy, but it was all burnt in the fire."

"I don't mean that; I never saw that. I mean, what I have seen since I have been here this time,—real old oak, all carved with lions and tigers—at least, I believe they are lions and tigers—and pigs and wolves, too, and all sorts of birds and things."

There was not an atom of old oak in Wenderholme Cottage, and there was not an atom of furniture of any kind in Wenderholme Hall. What could the child mean? Had he been dreaming?

Everybody's attention was drawn to little Jacob, who, becoming very red and excited, reiterated his assertion with considerable boldness and emphasis. When called upon for an explanation, he said that when he had been playing in the great barn, amongst the hay, he had got into a long low garret over the pigsties and the henhouses, and that it was full of old oak—"quite full of it," he reiterated.

Mrs Stanburne's face assumed an expression of thought and reflection, as if she were seeking inwardly for something imperfectly remembered.

"It strikes me," she said, "that when my husband's father modernised the house, he must have put part of the old things into other lumber-rooms than those at the top of the house itself. There are places amongst the out-buildings which have not been opened for many years, and I believe we should find something there."

The Duke became eager with anticipation. "The merest fragments of the original furniture would be precious, Mrs Stanburne. If we only had some specimens, as data, the rest might be reconstructed in the same taste. Let us go and look up whatever may remain. This little boy will be our guide."

Little Jacob, proud and excited, led the way to the great barn. It was fun to him to make the gentlemen follow him up the ladder, and over the hay, to a little narrow doorway that was about three feet above the hay-level. "That's the door," he said, and began to climb up the rough wall. He pushed it open by using all his force in frequent shoulder-thrusts, the rusty hinges gradually yielding. The adult explorers followed, and found themselves in total darkness.

"The old oak isn't here," said little Jacob; "it's a good bit further on."

The garret they were in served as a lumber-room for disused agricultural implements, and both the Duke and Mr Prigley hurt their shins against those awkward obstacles. At last they came to a blank wall, and then to what seemed to be a sort of cupboard, so far as they could guess by touching.

Behind the cupboard was a small space, into which little Jacob insinuated himself, and afterwards cheerfully sang out, "I'm all right; here's the place!"

The gentlemen pushed the cupboard back a foot or two, and found the doorway behind it by which their guide had passed. They were in a long, low attic, very dimly lighted by a little hole in the wall at its remote extremity. It was full of obstacles, which the Duke's touch recognised at once as carved oak.

"We ought to have had lanterns," he said; "how tantalising it is not to be able to see!"

"I would rather have a few slates taken off," John Stanburne answered; "that will make us a fine skylight. I have a dread of fire."

Little Jacob was sent to fetch two or three men, who in half an hour had removed slates

enough to throw full daylight on the scene—such daylight as had not penetrated there for many a long year. The old furniture of Wenderholme, grey, almost white, with age, filled the place from end to end in one continuous heap.

"But this is all white," said little Jacob, "and old oak ought to be brown, oughtn't it?"

"A little linseed-oil will restore the colour," the Duke replied. Then he exclaimed, "By Jove! Colonel, we have found a treasure—we have indeed! Let us get everything out into the yard, and then we can examine the things in detail."

The whole of the afternoon was spent in getting the old oak out. The gentlemen worked with the labourers, the Duke himself as energetically as any one. His great anxiety was to prevent injury to the carvings, which were very picturesque and elaborate. When the things were all out of doors, and the garret finally cleared, it was astonishing what a display they made. There were six cabinets, of which four had their entablatures supported by massive griffins or lions, and their panels inlaid with ebony and satinwood, or carved with bas-reliefs, which, though certainly far from accurate in point of design, produced a very rich effect; whilst even the plainest of the cabinets were interesting for some

curious specimen of turner's work or tracery. Then there were portions of three or four state beds, with massive deeply-panelled testers and huge columns, constructed with that disdain for mechanical necessity, and that emphatic preference of the picturesque, which marked the taste of the Elizabethan age. Thus, a single bed-post would in one place be scarcely thicker than a man's wrist, and in another thicker than his body; the weight of the whole being enormously out of proportion to its strength. There were a number of chairs of various patterns, but which agreed in uniting weight with fragility, and stateliness with discomfort. There were also innumerable fragments, difficult at first sight to classify, but amongst which might be recognised the legs of tables (constructed on the same principle as the bed-posts), and pieces that had been detached from chairs, and cabinets, and beds. In addition to all these things, there were quantities of old wainscot, some of it carved, or inlaid with various woods.

The men had come to the wainscot last, for it was reared against the walls of the garret behind the barricade of furniture. As they were removing it, there was a crashing of broken glass. A piece of this glass was brought to the light, and

it was found to be stained with the arms of the Stanburnes (or, a bend cottised sa.), simple old bearings like those of most ancient untitled houses. On this other fragments were carefully collected, and they all bore the arms of Stanburne impaled with those of families with which the Colonel's ancestors had intermarried. Mr Prigley, who was rather strong in heraldry, and knew the genealogy of his wife's family and all its alliances much better than did John Stanburne himself, recognised the martlets of Tempest, the red lion of Mallory, the green lion of Sherburne, the black lion of Stapleton, the chevron and cinquefoils of Falkingham, the golden lozenges of Plumpton, charged with red scallop-shells, in fess on a field of azure. "This has been a great heraldic window, commemorating the alliances of the family!" cried Mr Prigley, in ecstasy. "It must be restored, Colonel," said the Duke, "and brought down to the present time—down to you and Lady Helena."

Soon afterwards another discovery was due to the restless curiosity and boyish activity of little Jacob. He had found means to open one of the biggest of the cabinets, and had hauled out what seemed to him an old piece of carpet folded in many folds. He ran to inform the Duke of his

discovery; but his Grace, eagerly unfolding the supposed piece of carpet, displayed a rich field of

> "Arras green and blue,
> Showing a gaudy summer morn,
> Where with puffed cheek the belted hunter blew
> His wreathèd bugle-horn."

Other pieces of tapestry followed, and the heaviest of the cabinets was found to be nearly full of them. They consisted almost exclusively of hunting scenes and pastorals, with landscapes and foliage, which, though seldom approaching correctness as a representation of nature, must have produced, nevertheless, a superbly decorative effect when hung in the halls of Wenderholme.

The Duke had said very little for nearly an hour, except in ordering the men to arrange the furniture in groups. When this had been accomplished to his satisfaction, he turned to the Colonel, and made him the following little speech :—

"Colonel Stanburne, I congratulate you upon a discovery which would be interesting to any intelligent person, but is so most especially to the representative of the Stanburnes. Here are specimens of the furniture used by your ancestors from the reign of Henry VII. to that of James I. We have here ample data for the complete restoration of Wenderholme, even in the

details of wainscot and tapestry and glass. The minutest fragments in these heaps are valuable beyond price. It is getting late now, but to-morrow I will go through every bit of it and ticket everything, and when I leave I will send you workmen capable of doing everything that ought to be done."

Here little Jacob whispered to Mr Prigley, "It was I that found it out, wasn't it, Mr Prigley?" to which piece of self-assertion his tutor replied by the repressive monosyllable "Hush!"

But his Grace had overheard both of them, and said, "Indeed we are very much obliged to you, my little boy—very much obliged indeed. I should like to make you a little present of some sort for the pleasure you have afforded me this afternoon. You are going to Eton, I hear. Have you got a watch?"

Little Jacob pulled out a silver watch, of the old-fashioned kind popularly known as turnips, from their near approach to the spherical conformation. The Duke smiled as he looked at it, and asked what time it was. Little Jacob's watch was two hours late. "But it ticks yet," he said.

The Duke said no more just then, but when little Jacob was dressed to go down to dessert, his Grace's valet, Thompson, knocked at the door,

and brought a gold watch with a short chain, wherewith the young gentleman proudly adorned himself. One of the first things he did was to go to the Duke and thank him; and he did it so nicely that the nobleman was pleased to say that when little Jacob went to Eton he might "show his watch to the fellows, and tell 'em who gave it him."

CHAPTER XII.

Little Jacob was in luck's way, for the day he left Wenderholme Cottage, the Colonel tipped him with a five-pound note. He had a private interview, too, with Miss Edith, and there was quite a little scene between the infantine lovers.

"Are you really going away to-day, Charley?" she said, using the name she had given him.

"Yes; Mr Prigley says he must go back on account of Shayton Church. It will be Sunday to-morrow, you know."

"And when will you come back to us again?"

"I don't know. Perhaps never."

"Perhaps never!" exclaimed Miss Edith; "and aren't you very sorry?"

"Yes, very sorry. I have been very happy here."

"Well, then, you must come again. I wish you would. I like you very much. You are a

nice boy," and the frank young lady made him a small present—a little gold pin with a turquoise in it. "Keep that; you must never lose it, you know—it is a keepsake."

When little Jacob left with Mr Prigley, Mrs Stanburne was very kind to him, and said he must come again some time. This cheered Edith's heart considerably, but still there was a certain moisture in her eyes as she bade farewell to her boy-friend.

And in the same way I, who write this, feel a sadness coming over me which is not to be resisted. Children *never* live long. When they are not carried away in little coffins, and laid for ever in the silent grave, they become transformed so rapidly that we lose them in another way. The athletic young soldier or Oxonian, the graceful heroine of the ball-room, may make proud the parental heart, but can they quite console it for the eternal loss of the little beings that plagued and enlivened the early years of marriage? A father may sometimes feel a legitimate and reasonable melancholy as he contemplates the most promising of little daughters, full of vivacity and health. How long will the dear child remain to him? She will be altered in six months; in six years she will be succeeded by a totally different

creature—a creature new in flesh and blood and bone, thinking other thoughts and speaking another language. There is a sadness even in that change which is increase and progression; for the glory of noon-day has destroyed the sweet delicacy of the dewy Aurora, and the wealth of summer has obliterated the freshness of the spring.

In saying good-bye to little Jacob and his friend Miss Edith, now, I am like some father who, under the fierce sun of India, sends his children away from him, that they may live. He expects to meet them again, yet these children he will never meet. In their place he will see men and women in the vigour of ripened adolescence. And when he quits the deck before the ship sails, and the little arms cling round him for the last time, and for the last time he hears the lisping voices, the dear imperfect words, a great grief comes like ice upon his heart, and he feels a void, and a loss, and a vain longing, only less painful than what we feel at the grave's brink, when the earth clatters down on the coffin, and the clergyman reads his farewell.

CHAPTER XIII.*

If the reader has ever been absent for many years from some neighbourhood where he has once lived —where many faces were familiar to him, and the histories that belonged to the faces—where he once knew the complex relations of the inhabitants towards each other, and was at least in some measure cognisant of the causes which were silently modelling their existence in the future, as masons build houses in which some of us will have to live —if, after knowing the life of a neighbourhood so intimately as this, he has left that place for long years, and come back to it again to visit it, that he may renew the old sensations, and revive his half-forgotten ancient self, he has learned a lesson about human life which no other experience can

* This chapter, being merely a *résumé* of the situation in 1853, may be omitted by the reader who has missed nothing in the preceding volumes. It is here chiefly for the convenience of people addicted to the expeditive old practice of skipping.

teach. The inhabitants who have never gone away for long, the parson who preaches every Sunday in the church, the attorney who goes to his office every day after breakfast, the shopkeepers who daily see the faces of their customers across the counter, perceive changes, but not change. To them every vicissitude has the air of a particular accident, and it always seems that it might have been avoided. But the great universal change has that in its aspect which tells you that it cannot be avoided; and he who has once seen it face to face knows that all things are moving and flowing, and that the world travels fast in a sense other than the astronomical.

I have endeavoured to enlist the reader's interest in a set of persons who lived at Shayton and Sootythorn at the time of the establishment of the militia. The first training of Colonel Stanburne's regiment took place in the month of May 1853—to be precise, it met for the first time on the 23d of that month; and the 15th of the month following will long be remembered in the neighbourhood on account of the great fire at Wenderholme Hall, which, as the reader is already aware, took place under circumstances of the most exceptional publicity. It is probable that on no occasion, from the times of the Tudors

to our own, were so many people collected in the park and garden of Wenderholme as on that memorable night, and the scarcely less memorable day which followed it. Amongst the people present were nearly all the personages of this history—the Ogdens and Prigleys from Shayton, the Anisons from Whittlecup, and the Stedmans from Sootythorn. Let us consider a little what were their several positions and prospects at that time, taking the great fire as a date useful for reference.

At the time of the fire, then, Colonel Stanburne was thirty-five years old, and his only surviving child, Edith, was seven. As the reputed representative of one of the most ancient families in Yorkshire, and certainly the representative of the more wealthy, if junior, branch of it, he enjoyed great consideration in the country—a consideration augmented by his marriage with Lady Helena Basenthorpe (daughter of the Earl of Adisham), and also in a marked degree by his own personal qualities, by his frank and manly bearing, his hospitality and generosity, and uniform courtesy towards people of all classes. He had been offered the lieutenant-colonelcy of the militia regiment which was to meet for its trainings at Sootythorn, both on account of his position in the neighbourhood, and because he had served for some years

in the regular army. In all personal qualifications, a better man for such a post could not possibly have been found. It is necessary that a militia colonel should be able to harmonise people widely separated by distinctions of caste; that he should be of a kindly and genial temper, though not without firmness; and that, whilst the adjutant takes off his hands the work of ordering about details, the regiment should still look to him as its natural and social head. There never was the least danger that Colonel Stanburne would be eclipsed by his adjutant, or by anybody else, but he could not maintain the sort of position which belonged to his social and military rank without a considerable pecuniary expenditure. It is the misfortune of certain positions that the virtues which are necessary to those who occupy them have to be translated into a money outlay before they can be adequately appreciated. Colonel Stanburne was not an extravagant man by nature; he was simple in all his habits and tastes, liked to live quietly at his own house, hated London, and indulged himself only in an innocent taste for tandem-driving, which certainly did not cost him two hundred a-year. But this was John Stanburne's character in his private capacity; as a leader of men—as the head

of a regiment—his nature was very different. Whether his surroundings excited him, and so caused him to lose the mental balance which is necessary to perfect prudence, or whether he acted at first in ignorance of the wonderful accumulativeness of tradesmen's bills, and afterwards went on from the force of established habit, it is certain that from the 23d of May 1853, when his regiment assembled for the first time, Colonel Stanburne entered upon a new phase of his existence. Hitherto he had lived strictly within his income, whilst from the year 1853 he lived within it no longer.*

He had become aware, within a week of the first meeting of the regiment, that other colonels intended to give *fêtes* to their regiments before they were disbanded, and as a high-spirited horse will not willingly suffer another to pass it on the road, he resolved that, cost what it might, he would treat his men as liberally as any other colonel in the county. The consciousness that he was not so rich as his compeers made him go beyond them from anxiety not to be surpassed, and the festivities at Wenderholme exceeded in a marked degree all other similar festivities in the north

* At least within his inherited income; but he found means afterwards of increasing it, as will be seen in the next chapter.

of England. Where other colonels contented themselves with inviting their men to dinner, John Stanburne (this, however, was owing to the distance from Wenderholme to headquarters) invited the whole regiment to pass the night, an arrangement which involved no less than four meals for about eleven hundred people, the last of these meals being the luncheon after the presentation of colours. It involved also the necessity for hiring a large number of tents, which were sent down purposely from London. The day of the luncheon, every officer had permission to invite as many friends as he felt inclined to ask, and the Colonel's own invitations had been very numerous, many of his guests having stayed for days in the crowded and ill-fated mansion. Taking all these things into consideration, the reader will scarcely be surprised to learn that the feast cost Colonel Stanburne rather more than £1300, including £85 for the fireworks.

But beyond this, the reader will doubtless remember, that after the courage and devotion displayed by the men in saving the furniture, and in endeavouring to save the house, the Colonel resolved to add a pound to every man's bounty-money. Now there are two sorts of testimonials —there is the testimonial which is given by many

men to one (and this is the commoner form), and there is also the testimonial which is given by one man to many, a thing more in Roman usages than our own. In the first kind of testimonial the gift itself may look handsome when the contributions are individually small, but in the second the gift looks mean if its fractions are inconsiderable. The Colonel had considered the matter as if a single individual had rendered him a service of the same kind. "If a fellow worked all night to save my things," the Colonel had said to himself, "I'd give him at least a pound, and it doesn't diminish the merit of each individual militiaman that there happened to be a great number of them here," therefore a sovereign a-piece seemed to him the minimum. But that sovereign to the militiaman meant a clear thousand out of John Stanburne's pocket, so that, without counting the destruction of his mansion, his expenses on the 15th and 16th of June 1853 had amounted to about £2400.

Worse than this, his whole style of living had been heightened and increased by his position in the militia. The way he drove out was typical of everything else. Before his colonelcy he had been contented with a tandem, and his tandem was horsed from the four ordinary carriage-horses

which were regularly kept at Wenderholme. But since it had seemed convenient—nay, almost indispensably necessary—to have a commodious vehicle of some kind, that he might convey his officers from Sootythorn to Wenderholme every time he asked them to dinner—and since he had naturally selected a drag as the proper thing to have, and the pleasantest thing for himself to drive—there had been an increase in his stable expenses, and a change in his habits, which lasted all the year round. Besides, his natural kindliness and generosity of disposition, which had formerly found a sufficing expression in a general heartiness and good-nature, now began to express themselves in a much more expensive way—namely, by more frequent and more profuse hospitality.

In his domestic relations during the few months which preceded the great fire, there had gradually come about a perceptible and important change. Lady Helena had one of those natures, not uncommon amongst really superior women, which unite great powers of affection with a very keen faculty for criticism—a faculty so keen, and so disposed to exercise itself freely, that the best-loved persons are not safe from it. Her ladyship had also, from long habit and education, a very strong sense of what she believed to be her rights,

and an equally strong disposition to maintain them. Every woman is two persons (when she is not half-a-dozen), and so there were in fact two Lady Helenas,—the affectionate wife and the critical one—the woman grateful for kindness and the woman tenacious of her rights. It may be admitted that John Stanburne, with all his good qualities, was not *quite* the man to control and satisfy a nature such as hers. He had the tact of a simple-minded gentleman, but not a tact delicate enough to follow the complex tissue of a clever woman's thoughts, and he often blundered in the adoption of a certain manner with her which succeeded with others, but which she secretly disliked. So it had come to pass that Lady Helena's critical faculty had gradually predominated over her faculty of affection, and she made John Stanburne's domestic life rather uncomfortable to him. It was not that she *said* much, but he had become aware that she was always inwardly passing him in review. This made him irritable, and sometimes even a little harsh. The militia and its hospitalities, the greater number of people who now visited at Wenderholme, separated the two more and more, and they saw less of each other than they had ever before done whilst living under the same roof.

At the time of the great fire Mrs Stanburne was about sixty years old, but she looked five years younger. It is unnecessary to say more about her here, because the reader will gather all that need be told of her in what remains to be narrated.

One good effect of the militia in Sootythorn, as elsewhere, had been, to bring together people of very different social classification, and make them know each other better. The accident of little Jacob's wandering on the moor, and his final arrival at Wenderholme, had of itself served to introduce him to Colonel Stanburne; but the acquaintance would probably have been dropped if the boy had not been repeatedly brought under his notice by the fact that Isaac Ogden held a commission in the regiment. Little Jacob, who at the time of the fire was nine years and six months old, had made during the half-year preceding that event a remarkable advance in social position, so far as it is affected by the rank of the people that one knows. After living hitherto in the little world of Shayton, amongst such men as his uncle and such women as his grandmother, he had come to be on terms of the kind of intimacy which the disparity of age permitted with a gentleman like the Colonel and a lady like Mrs Stan-

burne. This change in the character of his acquaintance took place, too, at an age which is remarkably susceptible of new impressions, when the faculty of observation is already awakened, whilst the childish faculty of unconscious imitation still remains with scarcely diminished vigour. We may therefore allowably conclude that it would powerfully affect his manners and ideas, and consequently, in a great measure, the whole current of his life.

Isaac Ogden, the father of little Jacob, was at the time of the fire rather more than thirty-nine years old. His health had been greatly endangered by the habit of excessive drinking, so prevalent in Shayton, but the temporary loss of little Jacob had gone far to cure him; and a disgraceful relapse at Whittlecup, when on duty as lieutenant commanding Captain Stanburne's company, had so effectually warned him of his continued exposure to the old danger, that he wisely (for a man so situated) sought refuge in the vow of total abstinence.

His younger brother Jacob (his junior by two years, and therefore thirty-seven years old at the time of the fire) was at that date actively occupied in the construction of a new factory. A disappointment in love (such love as he was capable of

feeling) only drove him back to his old passion of money-making, which absorbed him more completely than ever. Mrs Ogden was sixty-two years old at that time, but so vigorous was her constitution that it still promised many years of undiminished health and activity.

The real head and representative of the Stanburnes, Philip Stanburne of Stanithburn Peel, was twenty-five years old in the year 1853. In the month of June in that year he engaged himself to Miss Alice Stedman, only daughter of Mr John Stedman, a manufacturer in Sootythorn; and in the February of the succeeding year she died of consumption at Avignon. Her father was fifty-nine years old when he lost her.

It is less necessary to particularise details in the case of the Anisons of Whittlecup. The reader remembers that Mr Joseph Anison and his wife were still in the prime of life at the date of the great fire, and that they brought the young ladies, their daughters, to the luncheon at Wenderholme on the following day, when the colours were publicly presented. Mr Anison at that time was in comfortable circumstances, but not so wealthy as many cotton-manufacturers and calico-printers who lived less expensively than he did.

He was spending about £2000 a-year, and his whole income did not exceed £2500.

Another friend of ours would have been delighted, however, to accept such a margin as that for his whole income. Poor Mr Prigley, the worthy incumbent of Shayton, was living with a wife and five children on a good deal less than £200 a-year, and struggling (not always successfully) to keep just literally within it.

Such were the positions of the personages of this history in the year 1853, and it is the more needful to remember how they were all situated then, that we have to leave them, or at least cease to follow the story of their lives, for an interval which is a great space in the existence even of the longest-lived human being. For twelve years all these people must be to us as acquaintances in a remote land of whom we have no news. Such intervals occur sometimes in the experience of actual life. People emigrate to the antipodes, and leave their English friends. Letters are exchanged for a year or two, they become rarer, and finally cease. Then the emigrants know no more of the men and women they once saw every day than if they lived in the planet Jupiter. But after long years of absence one of them goes back

to the old land, and treads once more, as in a dream, the altered streets of the old town, and learns in one hour what the work of the years has been. He learns that some are far richer, and others lamentably poorer, than he ever expected them to become; he finds out that the oddest social changes have somehow brought themselves about—that people have been making impossible marriages, and dying unexpected deaths, and that, in a word, the unforeseen has been perpetually happening.

So it will be with us when we return in the next chapter to our narrative, and take it up again in the year 1865.

CHAPTER XIV.

The interval of twelve years is over. We are in the year 1865.

Colonel Stanburne is still at the head of his regiment of militia, and during the annual trainings the Wenderholme coach has never ceased to run. Wenderholme has become quite a famous place, and tourists knowing in architecture come to see it from distant counties. It is a perfect type now of a great Elizabethan mansion: the exterior, especially the central mass over the porch, is enriched with elaborate sculpture; there are great mullioned windows everywhere, and plenty of those rich mouldings and copings which diversify the fronts of great houses of that age, and crown their lofty walls. There are globes and pinnacles on the completed gables, and at the intersections of the roofing rise fantastic vanes of iron-work, gilded, and glittering in the sunshine against the blue of the summer sky.

The interior has but one defect—it seems to require, in its inhabitants, the costume of Sir Walter Raleigh and the great ladies of his time. It has become like a poem or a dream, and one would hardly be surprised to find Edmund Spenser there reading the 'Faëry Queene' to the noble Surrey, or imagining, in the solitude of one of its magnificent rooms, some canto still to be written.

Let us pause here, and look at the place simply as in a picture, or series of pictures, before the current of events hurries us on till we have no time left to enjoy beautiful things, nor mental tranquillity enough to feel in tune with this perfect peace.

It is noon in summer. Under every oak in the great avenues lies a dark patch of shadow, and on the rich expanse of the open park the sunshine glows and darkens as the thin white clouds sail slowly in the blue aerial ocean. How rich and stately is the rounded foliage—how perfect the fulness of the protected trees! In the midst of them stands the house of Wenderholme, surrounded by soft margins of green lawn and wide borders of gleaming flowers.

It is pleasant this hot day to enter the great cool hall, to walk on its pavement of marble

(white marble and black, in lozenges), and rest the eye in the subdued light which reigns there, even at noon.

To the height of nine feet the hall is wainscoted all round with panels of black oak. Soon after the fire, whilst they were making excavations for the branch line which now connects Sootythorn with the East Lancashire Railway, they had come upon twelve or fourteen gigantic trunks of ancient oak, as black as ebony, and the Colonel, urged thereto by Mr Prigley, had at once bought it all up. There was more than enough to panel the whole hall, and it had been used mainly for this purpose. The effect, though grand, would have been funereal without relief of some kind, and this relief had been sought in the old art of inlaying. Each panel contained an alliance shield from the Stanburne pedigree, in which the heraldic colours were represented by stained woods of various kinds, whilst the shield was surrounded by a wreath of foliage in yellow satinwood, no two panels containing either the same arms or the same species of foliage. Above the wainscot ran a cornice of black marble, in which, on a gold ground running entirely round the room, might be read the complete genealogy of the house of Stanburne—read at least by such visitors as might

be familiar with the Gothic character in which it was written or illuminated. From this line to the lofty ceiling the immense wall-space was filled with great frescoes representing incidents in the history of the Stanburnes; combats and councils in which they had been present, down to the scene in the camp near Doncaster, when the flood rose that ended the unfortunate Pilgrimage of Grace. The ceiling was of light cedar, carved perhaps even too delicately for its great height above the ground, and illustrating heraldically the various descents of Stanburne from the Royal Houses that reigned in different realms of Europe during the middle ages. For light, this splendid room had two lofty oriels entirely filled with stained glass; and to warm it, a giant chimney of Norman stone, which was an edifice of itself. The hall was entirely dedicated to the illustration of the history of the family, so that it was possible, by means of the paintings, carvings, and inscriptions of all kinds with which it abounded, to learn everything about the Stanburnes which history or tradition had handed down to the present century and generation. In the centre was a long table covered with plate-glass, through which might be seen a museum of curious objects which had belonged to various members of the family;

and in the four corners of the hall stood four suits of armour, which had actually been worn by knightly Stanburnes on the great battle-fields of France and Scotland. Let not the Colonel be blamed for all this family egotism. It was a great deal more Philip Stanburne's doing, and even Mr Prigley's doing, than his. And even if the Colonel had devised it all in his own head, I, for one, should not have blamed him for it very severely. A man may still have a feeling for the poetry of the great past, still have a lingering romantic sentiment about his forefathers, without on that account disdaining a single human being; and the worst characteristics of aristocracy—its hardness of heart, its self-worship, its contempt of the poor and the weak—are found more often in combination with the commercial shrewdness of a Dombey than with such romantic retrospection as Byron's when he wrote about Newstead, or Scott's when he erected Abbotsford.

The strange old motto of the Stanburnes, which perpetuated the tradition about the etymology of their name, was carved outside the house on the stone walls, and inside it on many a spare space of oak or stone. It expressed a long resistance against the wearing flow of time, against the strong impetuous floods, the overwhelming torrents of

destruction, which Fate directs against us in the winter of adversity.

Stand firm, Stane i' th' Burn.

The Colonel liked this motto, and always used it with his arms, even on his note-paper.

What had been done for the entrance-hall had been done, with adaptation to their different purposes, for all the rooms in the house. Under pretext of restoration, Wenderholme had been made a great deal more splendid, and incomparably more comfortable, than it ever was in the time of its pristine magnificence. In the wainscot and the furniture the architect had lavishly used a great variety of strange and beautiful woods, quite unknown to our ancestors; and not contented with the stones and marbles of the British islands, he had brought varieties from Normandy, and Sicily, and Spain, and the Mediterranean shores of Africa. As for the arrangements that regarded comfort and convenience, John Stanburne's architect had learned the extent of a rich Englishman's exigence when he erected the mansions of five or six great cotton-manufacturers, and, strong in this experience, had made Wenderholme a model place for elaborately perfect housekeeping.

What had been done with the modern furniture that had been saved on the night of the fire? We may learn this, and some other matters also, when the Colonel comes in to lunch.

He crosses his great hall, and goes straight to the dining-room. The twelve years that have passed by have aged him even more than so many dozens of months ought to have done. His hair is getting prematurely grey, and his step, though still firm and manly, has lost a good deal of its elasticity, and something of its grace. The expression on his countenance does not quite correspond with all the glory of the paradise that is his, with the sunshine on the broad green park and vast shade-bestowing trees, with the rich peace of these cool and silent halls. When he is with other people, his face is very much as it used to be; but when he is alone, as he is now, it looks weary and haggard, as if to live were an effort and a care—as if some hateful anxiety haunted him, and wore him hour after hour.

"Tell her ladyship that I have come in to lunch; and stay—you need not wait upon us to-day."

Lady Helena comes with her scarcely audible little step, and quietly takes her place at the table. *She* is not very much changed by the

lapse of these last twelve years. She is still rather pretty, and she looks as intelligent as ever, though not perhaps quite so lively. But as for liveliness, she has nothing to encourage her vivacity just now, for the Colonel eats his slice of cold beef in silence, and scarcely even looks in her direction. When he looks up at all, it is at the window,—not that there is anything particular to be seen there—only the sunny garden with the fountain, fed from the hills behind.

"My dear," said Lady Helena, "as the regiment is disbanded now, I suppose we have no longer any reason to remain at Wenderholme? Suppose we went up to town again for the end of the season? There are several people that you promised to see, and didn't call upon before you came away. There's old Lady Sonachan's ball on the 15th, and you ought to go to old Lady Sonachan; and I think we ought to do something ourselves in Grosvenor Square—you know we meant to do, if the training of the regiment had not been a fortnight earlier than we expected."

"I think it would be as well to stop quietly at Wenderholme."

"I'm afraid, dear," said Lady Helena, caressingly, "that you're losing your good habits, and

going back to the ideas you had many years ago, before the militia began. You've been so very nice for a long time now that it would be a pity to go back again to what you used to be before you were properly civilised. For you know, dear, you were *not* quite civilised then — you were *sauvage*, almost a recluse; and now you like society, and it does you good—doesn't it, dear? Everybody ought to go into society—we all of us need it. *Do* come with me to town, dear, and after that I will go with you wherever you like."

"Helena," the Colonel answered, gravely, "that's the sort of game we have been playing for many years. 'Do indulge me in my fancy, and then I will indulge you in some fancy of your own.' It is time to put a stop to that sort of thing."

"It would be a pity, I think. Have we not been very happy, my love, all these years together?"

"Yes, no doubt, of course. But I'll tell you what it is, Helena—we made a great mistake."

Lady Helena's face flushed, and her eyes filled. "A mistake! I am grieved if you think your marriage was a mistake, John. I never think so of mine."

"It isn't that; I don't mean the marriage. I

mean something since the marriage. But it's no use talking about that just now. I say, put your shawl on and take a little walk with me, will you?"

They went in silence by the path that rose towards the moors behind the house. When they came to the pond, the Colonel seemed to pause and hesitate a little; then he said, "No, not here—on the open moor."

They came to the region of the heather, and the park of Wenderholme, with all the estate around it, lay spread like a great map beneath them.

"Sit down here, Helena, and let us talk together quietly. It may be better for both of us." Then came a long pause of silence, and when Lady Helena looked in the Colonel's face, she perceived that his eyes were wandering over the land from one field to another, with a strange expression of lingering and longing and regret. Evidently he had forgotten that she was with him.

"Dear," she said at last, "what was that great mistake you talked about?"

He started and looked round at her suddenly. Then, laying his hand very gently on her shoulder, said with strange tenderness, "You won't be hurt, will you? It was mutual, you know."

"Do you recollect, Helena," he went on, after a little while, "the time when I first began to drive four horses? You didn't approve of it—of course I know you didn't—and there were a good many other things that you didn't approve of either, and your opinion was plain enough in your way with me. Well, then, there were some things that you either did or wanted to do, you know, which didn't quite suit me, and seemed to me as unnecessary as my fancy for driving four horses seemed to you. But I found out that I could keep you in a good temper, and make you indulge me in my fancies, by indulging you in corresponding fancies of your own. So whenever I resolved upon an extravagance, I stopped your criticisms by some bribe; and the biggest bribe of all—the one that kept you indulgent to me year after year—was that house in Grosvenor Square."

"It was your own proposing."

"That's just what I am saying. I proposed the house in town to keep you quiet—to keep you from criticising me. You had got into a way of criticising me about the time of the fire, and I hated being criticised. So I thought, 'She shall have her own way if she'll only let me have mine;' and it seems you thought something of the same kind, for you became very indul-

gent with me. That has been our mistake, Helena."

"But *was* it such a mistake after all, darling? Have we not been very happy all these years? I remember we were not so happy just when the militia began. You were not so nice with me as you have been since."

"Perhaps not—and you weren't as nice with me either, Helena; but we were nearer being right then than we ever have been during the last few years. I mean to say that, if we had said plainly to each other then—in a kind sort of way, of course—what each was thinking, we should have spared each other a great deal of suffering."

"We have suffered very little, love; we have been very happy."

"The punishment is yet to come. I've been punished, in my mind, for years past, and said nothing about it to you, because I wanted partly to spare you, and partly to screen myself, for I thought I could bring things round again."

"Do you mean about money?"

"Yes."

"Well, but, dear, you always told me that there had been no diminution in our income. Did you not tell me the truth?"

"All that was perfectly true. The income was not diminished, but the new investments weren't as safe as the old ones. Don't you see, we had less capital to get our income from, and our expenses were even heavier than they used to be. So I invested at higher interest, to make up the difference in our income, and I've been carrying that on to an extent you know nothing about."

Lady Helena began to be alarmed. Nobody knew better than her ladyship that the *prestige* of aristocracy rested ultimately upon wealth, and that she could no more keep up her station without a good income than her strength without food. It had been a capital error of John Stanburne's from the beginning, not to consult his wife on every detail of his money transactions. She had always been perfectly prudent in not letting current expenses go beyond income, although, as they had only one child, there appeared to be no necessity for saving. She would have advised him well if he had invited her to advise him; but though he had always told her, with truth, that their income was four thousand a-year, he had not told her the history of the capital sum from which this income had, in consequence of some devices of his own, been drawn so unfailingly. The restoration of Wenderholme had been

a very costly undertaking indeed. The whole outlay upon it John Stanburne had never dared to calculate; but we, who have no reason for that nervous abstinence from terrible totals, know that during the years immediately succeeding the great fire, he did not, in the restoration and adornment of his beautiful home, spend less than twenty-seven thousand pounds. The result, no doubt, was worth even so large an outlay as this; nor was the sum in itself very wildly extravagant, when one reflects that one of the Sootythorn cotton-spinners laid out fully as much on an ugly new house about half a mile beyond Chesnut Hill. But it diminished John Stanburne's funded property by more than one-half, and it therefore became necessary to invest the remainder more productively, to keep his income up to its old level.

Whilst he is telling these things to Lady Helena in his own way, let us narrate them somewhat more succinctly in ours. It had happened, about three years after the fire—that is, in the year 1856—that a new bank had been established in Sootythorn, called the Sootythorn District Bank, and some of the capitalists both in the immediate locality and in the neighbouring country had invested in it rather largely. Amongst these

was our acquaintance, Mr Joseph Anison of Arkwright Lodge, near Whittlecup, who, not having a son to succeed him in his business, did not care to extend it, and sought another investment for his savings which might as nearly as possible approach in productiveness the ample returns of commerce. Mr Anison was one of the original founders of the new bank, and if the idea had not positively its first source in his own mind, it was he who brought it to a practicable shape, and finally made it a reality. Colonel Stanburne had kept up his acquaintance with the Anisons, who were invited to the house-warming of the renovated Wenderholme, and who after that went there from time to time to stay the orthodox "brace of nights." During one of these visits, the Colonel took Joseph Anison into his confidence about his money matters—at least so far as to show him the present reduced state of his funded capital; and he added that, with his diminished income, it had become necessary to economise by a determined reduction of expenses, the most obvious means to which would be the resignation of his commission in the militia—which, directly or indirectly, cost him a clear thousand a-year—and the abandonment of the house in town, which had then recently been established for the gratifi-

cation of Lady Helena, and furnished with the modern furniture saved at the burning of Wenderholme. Mr Anison strongly dissuaded the Colonel from both these steps, urging upon him the popularity which he enjoyed both in the regiment and at Sootythorn, and even certain considerations of public duty to which an English gentleman is rarely altogether insensible. The Colonel liked the regiment, he liked his position, and it may even be said, without any exaggeration of his merits, that, independently of the consideration which it procured him, he felt an inward satisfaction in doing something which could be considered useful. To resign his commission, then, would have been difficult for another reason, if not altogether impossible. The regiment, instead of coming to Sootythorn for a month's training in the year, was on permanent garrison duty in Ireland, and he could not gracefully leave it.

The other project—the abandonment of his house in London—might have been agreeable enough to himself personally, but he was one of those husbands who, from weakness or some other cause, find it impossible to deprive a wife of anything which she greatly cares for. This defect was due in his case, as it is in many others,

to an inveterate habit of politeness towards all women, *even* towards his wife; and just as no gentleman would take possession of a chair or a footstool which a lady happened to be using, so John Stanburne could not turn Lady Helena out of that house in town which she liked so much, and which both of them looked upon as peculiarly her own. It is easy for rough and brutal men to do these things, but a gentleman will often get into money embarrassments out of mere delicacy. I don't mean to imply that the Colonel's way of dealing with his wife was the best way. It would have been far better to be frank with her from the beginning; but then a simple nature like John Stanburne's has such a difficulty in uniting the gentleness and the firmness which are equally necessary when one has to carry out measures which are sure to be disagreeable to a lady. The *suaviter in modo*, &c., is, after all, a species of hypocrisy—at least until it has become habitual; and when the Colonel was soft in manner, which he always was with women, he was soft in the matter also. In a word, though no one was better qualified to please a lady, he was utterly incapable of governing one—an incapacity which perhaps he shared with the majority of the sons of Adam.

As retrenchment had appeared impossible, or, at least, too difficult to be undertaken so long as there was the alternative of a change of investments, the Colonel begged Mr Anison, as an experienced man of business, to look out for something good in that way; and Mr Anison, who, with his brother capitalists, had just started the Sootythorn District Bank, honestly represented to his friend that a better and a safer investment was not likely to be found anywhere. As he preached not merely by precept but by example, and showed that he had actually staked everything which he possessed on the soundness of the speculation—he, the father of a family—Colonel Stanburne was easily persuaded, and became one of the largest shareholders. The bank was soon in a very flourishing condition—in fact it was really prosperous, and exceeded the most sanguine hopes of its originators. The manager was both an honourable man and a man of real ability as a financier. The dividends were enormous, and *not* paid out of capital.

After five or six years of this prosperity, during which the Colonel's aggregate income had been higher than it ever was during his best days as a fundholder, he began to conceive the idea of replacing, by economy, the sum of £27,000, which

had been withdrawn from his funded capital for the restoration and embellishment of Wenderholme. To do this he prudently began by saving the surplus of his income; but as this did not seem to accumulate fast enough for his desires, he thought that, without permanently alienating his estate, he might mortgage some portion of it, and invest the money so procured at the higher interest received by the shareholders of the Sootythorn District Bank. The mere surplus of interest would of itself redeem the mortgage after a few years, leaving the money borrowed in his own hands as a clear increase of capital. In this way he mortgaged a great part of the estate of Wenderholme to our friend Mr Jacob Ogden of Milend.

All these things were done *clam Helenâ*—unknown to her ladyship. She was not supposed to understand business, and probably the Colonel, from the first, had apprehended her womanish fears of the glorious uncertainties of speculation. His conscience, however, was perfectly at ease. At the cost of a degree of risk which he set aside as too trifling to be dwelt upon, he was gradually—nay, even rapidly—replacing the money sunk in Wenderholme; and every day brought him nearer to the time when he might live in his noble mansion without the tormenting thought

that it had been paid for out of his inherited capital. At the same time, so far from withdrawing from the world's eyes into the obscurity which is usually one of the most essential conditions of retrenchment, he actually filled a higher place in the county than he had ever occupied before. The taste for society grows upon us and becomes a habit, so that the man who a year or two since bore solitude with perfect ease, may tomorrow find much companionship a real want, though an acquired one. People meet to amuse each other, to enjoy all those pleasures (and they are many) which can best be enjoyed in common, so that the love of society often means not merely a sympathy for human nature, but an enjoyment of good eating, and billiards, and the chase. Now, since John Stanburne had a very healthy and sound constitution, he was eminently capable of enjoying himself, and therefore easily became a highly sociable person. The more sociable he became, the more he felt persuaded that the house in London was a proper thing to keep up, and there came to be quite an admirable harmony between him and Lady Helena. She had always loved him very much, but in the days when he had a fancy for retirement, she had felt just a shade of contempt for the rusticity of his tastes.

As this rusticity wore off, her ladyship respected her husband more completely; and the coolness which had existed between them in the year 1853 was succeeded by an affectionate indulgence on both sides, which was entirely satisfactory to Lady Helena, and was only a little less so to the Colonel, because he knew it to be a sacrifice of firmness.

He began to feel this very keenly at the time our story reopens, because some very heavy misfortunes had befallen the Sootythorn District Bank, and the Colonel began to doubt whether, after all, his financial operations (successful as they had hitherto appeared) were quite so prudent as he and Mr Anison had believed. Mr Stedman had been against the enterprise from the very first, and had openly attempted to dissuade both Mr Anison and the Colonel from any participation in it; but then Mr Stedman, who had neither the expenses of a family nor the drain of a high social position, could afford the utmost extremity of prudence, and could literally have lived in his accustomed manner if his money had been invested at one per cent. However, the Bank had kept up the Colonel's position by giving him an easy income for several years; and by enabling him to put by a surplus, had com-

pensated, by the mental satisfaction which is the reward of those who save, any little anxiety which from time to time may have disturbed the tranquillity of his mind. But now the anxiety was no longer a light one, to be compensated by thinking about savings. A private meeting of the principal shareholders had been held the day before, and it had become clear to them that the position of the Sootythorn Bank (and consequently their own individual position, for their liability was unlimited) was perilous in the extreme. Immense sums had been advanced to cotton firms which were believed to be sound, but which had gone down within the preceding fortnight; and many other loans were believed to be very doubtful. Under these circumstances, the chief shareholders—Colonel Stanburne amongst the number—bound themselves by a mutual promise not to attempt to sell, as any unusual influx of shares upon the market would at once provoke their depreciation, and probably create a panic.

Whilst the Colonel had been telling all these things to Lady Helena, he had not dared to look once upon her face; but when he had come to an end, a silence followed—a silence so painful that he could not bear it, and turned to her that she might speak to him. She was not looking in his

direction. She was not looking at Wenderholme, nor on any portion of the fair estate around it; but her eyes were fixed on the uttermost line of the far horizon. She was very pale; her lips were closely compressed, and there was a tragic sternness and severity in her brow that John Stanburne had never before seen.

For a whole minute — for sixty intolerable seconds—not one word escaped her.

"Helena, speak to me!"

She turned slowly towards him, and rose to her feet. Then came words — words that cut and chilled as if they were made of sharp steel that had been sheathed in a scabbard of ice.

"You have been very imprudent and very weak. You are not fit to have the management of your own affairs."

She said no more. She was intensely angry at her husband, but in her strongest irritation she never said anything not justified by the circumstances—never put herself in the wrong by violence or exaggeration. She had a great contempt for female volubility and scolding; and the effect of her tongue, when she used it, was to the effect of a scold's rattle what the piercing of a rapier is to the cracking of a whip.

John Stanburne dreaded the severity of his

wife's judgment more than he would have dreaded the fury of an unreasonable woman. He had not a word to offer in reply. He felt that it was literally and accurately true that he had been "very imprudent and very weak, and was not fit to have the management of his own affairs."

He covered his face with both hands in an agony of self-accusation, and remained so for several minutes. Then he cried out passionately, "Helena, dear Helena!" and again, "Helena! Helena!"

There was no answer. He lifted up his eyes. The place she had occupied was vacant. She had noiselessly departed from his side.

CHAPTER XV.

About four o'clock the same afternoon, the Colonel was sitting alone in a private den that he had filled with the simple furniture of his old one. There were two or three very easy old military chairs, and the other things, including an unpicturesque chest of drawers, were of the kind that officers have in barracks. Indeed the den presented exactly the appearance of a room in barracks, and therefore was in marked contrast to the somewhat stiff and stately magnificence that now prevailed at Wenderholme.

Fyser, who had been the Colonel's valet during his old military life, still adhered to him faithfully, and John Stanburne, when he sat sometimes in this little room of an evening, surrounded by his bachelor associations, could almost live the old life over again when Fyser came in with brandy and soda-water, the favourite beverage of the

thirsty souls in the old regiment. He taps at the door now—the old tap that the Colonel has heard for so many years. He announces a visitor—and how very intimate this visitor must be, for he is to be received here, in the den itself, amidst its confessed disorder!

In the young gentleman who enters the reader will never recognise, unless he is told, the little Jacob of twelve years ago. The very name has been gradually becoming more and more absurdly inapplicable, till it reached the climax of unfitness when the youth reached the climax of his stature. Little Jacob is more than six feet high, and possesses the advantages of an athletic figure and a university degree. He has curly brown hair and a pair of honest eyes, which go far to compensate for the absence of beauty in the face. The figure is manly and well formed, but the face is more honest and intelligent than beautiful. The child's prettiness has long since disappeared. It is difficult to describe a face in words; but if I were a painter, I think I should like to dwell upon that face, and study it, and paint from it day after day. The brow is perhaps rather determined than thoughtful, and the full lips, over which a young moustache is growing, are rather sensuous and generous than ambitious, so that the deter-

mination that may be read elsewhere in the face is not likely, one would infer, to be directed to purely selfish ends. The sort of footing he is on at Wenderholme may be best judged of by the following conversation :—

"Well, little Jacob, my boy, what has brought *you* here? I thought you were going out yachting just now, and were starting from Lytham on a great cruise! Are you come to say good-bye to us?"

"No, I hope not, Colonel Stanburne."

"Are you going to stay a few days? You know your room is always ready for you."

"Please, Colonel, that must depend on your answer to—to a request I am come to make."

"What is the boy up to? Upon my word he seems positively embarrassed. Little Jacob embarrassed! Why, I thought for sheer impudence he hadn't his match in the Middle Temple. Have some brandy and soda-water! Do, now; here's the soda-water, and here's the brandy. Pop! How brisk it is at this time of the year!"

Little Jacob thought the Colonel very merry and gay. Poor John Stanburne, alas! was so miserable, that he needed some violent reaction, and was ready to think that it might be found in the society of this youth, whom Fortune had ever favoured.

"Well, little Jacob, what on earth is it all about?"

"I suppose you know, Colonel Stanburne, you know that I love Edith. May I ask Edith to marry me?"

The Colonel's face became suddenly very grave. "My dear boy," he said, "in your own interest I will not either say 'yes' or 'no' just now, but come again in a week, or don't come again, just as you may see fit to do in a week's time."

"I had hoped, Colonel, that you would have helped me with Lady Helena. You have always been so kind to me, that—I confess—I had come to count upon your kindness even to this extreme. We have often talked together in a way that you understood—at least I thought so. I know that it seems very ambitious in me to aspire to Edith, but then it is not really ambition. If Edith were penniless, I should feel just in the same way."

"If Edith were penniless," repeated the Colonel, with a strange look and manner; "if Edith were penniless—if Edith were penniless."

Jacob was astonished at the strangeness of the Colonel's air and tone, and he felt embarrassed by the silence that succeeded. He himself was the first to break it.

"You know, sir, I should not be dependent on

Miss Stanburne's fortune. My uncle has made me his heir, and gives me a good allowance on my marriage."

"Your uncle is a rich man." Then the Colonel paused, and lighted a cigar, offering another to little Jacob.

"You know very well, my boy," he continued, "that I am not sending you away with a refusal, and you need not go and make yourself miserable, you understand? But there are reasons which compel me to withhold my consent for a week or two, and I'm not at liberty to tell you my reasons, because other people's interests are involved in them. I may say, though, that you have my consent if you can get Lady Helena's and your uncle's."

"My uncle would be very proud of such a marriage for me. It is far above his best hopes for me."

"He may change his opinion very shortly, and so may Lady Helena, but in another way. Just now the opposition, as you know, would come chiefly from her. She's of rather a more swell family than I am, don't you see? and has rather swell ideas about these things. She expects a Dook for Edith, I know she does. She'll have nothing under a coronet, at any rate; and you, my

dear boy, you know you haven't got a coronet. Well, then, on the other hand, your uncle is favourable just now; but wait a bit and see whether he will be as much so next month."

"I don't see why he shouldn't, Colonel. He seldom changes his mind."

But he will very likely change it soon. However, so may Lady Helena. I say, come again in a month, or don't come again, just as you may feel inclined. Mind I don't look upon you as tied by anything you've been saying to me just now. You aren't tied, recollect that. And now let's talk about something else. What's new in Shayton?"

"Nothing, Colonel, except the excitement about the Sootythorn Bank."

"Excitement! excitement! what excitement?"

"There is a panic in Sootythorn, and a run upon the Bank. They have been sending to all the capitalists for gold. A messenger came to Shayton this morning to my uncle's at full speed, and begged him to let them have gold, but he refused to accommodate them. He had upwards of five thousand by him in sovereigns, and he would not give them a single coin."

The Colonel looked at his watch. "The Bank closes at four," he said; "if they have been able

to go on till then, they have still time before them."

But early the next morning the people for miles round had read the following paragraph in the 'Sootythorn Gazette':—

"THE DISTRICT BANK.—We are sorry to say that, during the whole of yesterday, the town of Sootythorn was in a state of the wildest financial panic. A rumour gained consistency in the forenoon that the Bank would stop payment before evening, and depositors rushed to the counting-house in constantly-increasing numbers. The scene was one of the most exciting we ever witnessed. The clerks were paying money across the counter in such quantities, that the reserve, which had been usually considered an ample one, was exhausted at 1 P.M., and for the next two hours the Bank was dependent upon supplies of gold advanced by friends. Messengers and telegrams were sent in all directions, and at half-past two the fate of the company depended upon a telegram from Messrs Rothschild. Had their answer been favourable, advances of gold would still have been forthcoming in Sootythorn itself; but unfortunately they declined to sustain the Bank in the present crisis, and all cash payments

had to be stopped at ten minutes to three, or seventy minutes before the usual closing time. There are some faint hopes that this stoppage may be only temporary, and that payments may be resumed this day at 10 A.M., but this seems extremely doubtful. If, as is generally apprehended, the Sootythorn District Bank is a wrecked concern, it is terrible to contemplate the widespread ruin which must necessarily follow. Some of the most respected families in this neighbourhood must be reduced to poverty, and great numbers of minor shareholders will be deprived of the savings on which they had depended for support in sickness and old age."

SECOND EDITION.—10.15 A.M.

"The excitement about the Sootythorn District Bank having been unallayed this morning, we have determined to issue a special edition of the 'Gazette.' We deeply regret to have no better news to communicate. The doors of the Bank are still closed, and it is now ascertained beyond a doubt that the shareholders will have to meet the most onerous liabilities. For the last two years the position of the Bank has been radically unsound, owing to several large and very unfor-

tunate advances and the general state of trade. Had it been able to weather the present difficulties, a prosperous future seemed to lie before it, but the stoppage of yesterday, in the actual state of its affairs, cannot be otherwise than fatal."

Third Edition.—11 a.m.

"A deplorable addition has to be made to the grievous news of this morning. The manager of the Bank, Mr Ormindale, had suffered so terribly from the anxiety of yesterday and this morning, that a fit of temporary insanity supervened, during which the unhappy gentleman destroyed himself by cutting his throat. Not the slightest moral blame attaches to him. He managed the affairs of the Bank with remarkable prudence and ability until the last two years, when he became less happy, as it would seem, in his use of the company's capital. He leaves a numerous family, and will long be sincerely regretted by his many friends in Sootythorn."

CHAPTER XVI.

Soon after young Jacob (it is absurd to call him little Jacob now, though the Ogdens all do so to this day)—soon after young Jacob had told the Colonel as much of the bad news as he had gathered in passing through Sootythorn, a messenger on horseback brought the following letter to Wenderholme :—

"My dear Colonel Stanburne,—As you have been aware for some time of the precarious position of the Bank, the bad news I have to communicate will not find you altogether unprepared. We have been obliged to stop payment, and it will require such a large sum to meet the liabilities of the company that both you and I and many other shareholders must consider ourselves ruined men. God grant us fortitude to bear it! When I advised you to embark in this specula-

tion, God knows I did so honestly, and you have the proof of it in the fact that I am ruined along with you. It will be hard for you to descend from a station you were born for and are accustomed to, and it is hard for me to see the fruits of a life of hard work swept away just as I am beginning to be an old man. Pray think charitably of me, Colonel Stanburne. I did what I believed to be best, and though my heart is heavy, my conscience is clear still. May heaven give strength to both of us, and to all others who are involved in the same ruin!—Yours truly,

"JOSEPH ANISON."

When the Colonel had read this note, he handed it to young Jacob, saying simply, "That will explain to you why some other people's views about you and Edith are likely to change very soon;" and then he remained quietly seated in his long military chair, resting his elbows on the straps that were the arms of it, and watching the young man's face.

When Jacob had read it in his turn—he being wholly unprepared for any such announcement—the thing was more than he could comprehend. The idea was by no means a complex one. The Colonel was ruined by the break-down of the

Sootythorn Bank—that was all; but a very simple idea indeed, for which the mind is not ready, gets into it with difficulty.

"You don't seem to understand that letter," the Colonel said. "Pray let me make it clear to you. Perhaps you still think Wenderholme belongs to John Stanburne: it belongs to the creditors of the Sootythorn Bank. You know what the word 'ruin' means, I suppose. Well, I am ruined, and Edith's ruined too. Edith is a penniless girl now, and will have to marry on her own merits."

The young man's face flushed, and his lip quivered, and the tears came into his eyes. "Dear Colonel Stanburne," he said, tenderly, as he took the hand of his friend in both his own—"dear Colonel Stanburne, how—how kind you have always been to me!" It was not very *apropos*, but it was the first thought that came into the lad's head. He did not know what to say—it is so awkward to express condolence properly; and then the Colonel was not the sort of person to take what Sir Walter after *his* ruin called "poor-manning."

"You see, my dear boy," the Colonel resumed, "what a difference this makes."

"It makes no difference, sir, in my feel-

ings about Edith; and if it were not such a misfortune for yourself and for Lady Helena, I should be glad of it. It was not Wenderholme that I loved."

"Your uncle will change his views now, however. Edith isn't a good match now. It won't do for you to quarrel with your uncle, you know. Take my advice, and don't quarrel with your uncle."

Poor Jacob began to feel very strongly that the Dives at Milend would regard the Colonel's ruin with a moral disapproval that would fatally extend itself to his daughter. The Colonel had been right in his anticipations. Lady Helena's opposition, hitherto so surely calculated upon, would now probably be at an end, but the equally serious opposition of uncle Jacob would from this hour date its beginning.

It was the youth's custom to stay all night at Wenderholme when he came to call there, but this time he perceived that the Colonel would prefer to be alone, so he drove back to Sootythorn in the evening.

CHAPTER XVII.

When overwhelming misfortune comes upon us, we often bear it because we do not thoroughly realise it. There is such a difference between knowing and realising! We *know* the orbit of the earth, but which of us ever realises the length of his annual voyage in the celestial spaces? We *know* that death awaits us all, yet how seldom do we realise the idea of dissolution!

John Stanburne knows that he is ruined—he has read it in Mr Anison's letter, he has informed young Jacob of the fact, and he will tell Lady Helena of it also some time during the evening; but the time of full perception is yet to come, and it may be days or weeks before he sees things in the plain daylight of reality. It is better for him that it should be so—the full truth will enter his mind gradually, and find accommodation there without destroying the balance of his faculties.

For the present he is like one who grieves and suffers in a dream.

He must have some vague perception that he has not fully grasped the import of this great change, for he reads Mr Anison's letter again and again. Then he stands thinking, thinking. But *is* he really thinking?

One of the most strange and painful things about ruin is, that for days, and even weeks, after it has actually come upon a man, his outward life remains in all its details as it was before; so that in the interval between the loss of fortune and the abandonment of his habitual way of living he leads a double life, just as a ghost would do if it were condemned to simulate the earthly existence it led before death amongst the dear familiar scenes. For there are two sorts of separation. You get into a railway train, and take ship, and emigrate to some distant colony or some alien empire, and see no more the land which gave you birth, nor the house which sheltered you, nor the faces of your friends. This separation is full of sadness; but there is another separation which, in its effect upon the mind, is incomparably more to be dreaded, whose pain is incomparably more poignant. I mean, that terrible separation which divides you from the persons with whom you are

still living, from the house you have never quitted, from the horses in the stable, from the dog upon the hearth, from the bed you lie in, from the chair you sit upon, from the very plate out of which you eat your daily food! The man who, still in his old house, knows that he has become insolvent, feels this in a thousand subtly various tortures, that succeed each other without intermission. A curse has fallen on everything that he sees, on everything that he touches—a wonderful and magical curse, devised by the ingenuity of Plutus, the arch-enchanter! The wildest fairy tale narrates no deeper sorcery than this. Everything shall remain, materially, exactly as it was; but when you go into your library you shall not be able to read, in your dining-room the food shall choke you, and you shall toss all night upon your bed.

And thus did it come to pass that from this hour all the beauties, and the luxuries, and all the accumulated objects and devices that made up the splendour of Wenderholme, became so many several causes of torture to John Stanburne. And by another effect of the same curse, he was compelled to torture himself endlessly with these things, as a man when he is galvanised finds that

his fingers contract involuntarily round the brass cylinders through which flows the current that shatters all his nerves with agony.

The first bell rings for dinner, and the Colonel, from long habit, leaves his little den, and is half-way up the grand staircase before he knows that he is moving. That great staircase had been one of the favourite inventions in new Wenderholme. It was panelled with rich old yew, and in the wainscot were inserted a complete series of magnificent Italian tapestries, in which was set forth the great expedition of the Argonauts. There was the sowing of the poisoned grain, the consequent pestilence of Thebes, the flight of Phryxus and Helle on the winged ram with the golden fleece, the fall of poor Helle in the dark Hellespont, the sacrifice of the ram at Colchis, the murder of Phryxus. Above all, there was the glorious embarkation in the good ship Argo, when Jason and the Grecian princes came down to the shore, with a background of the palaces they left. And in another great tapestry the ship Argo sailed in the open sea, her great white sail curving before the wind, and the blue waves dancing before her prow, whilst the warriors stood quaintly upon the deck, with all their glittering arms. Then there

was the storm on the coast of Thrace, and the famous ploughing-scene with the golden-horned bulls, and the sowing of the dragon's teeth.

Dragon's teeth! John Stanburne paused long before that tapestry. Had he not likewise been a sower of dragon's teeth, and were not the armed men rising, terrible, around him?

Who will help him as Medea helped Jason? Who will pass him through all his dangers in a day?

It will not be his wife—it will not be Lady Helena. She is coming up the great staircase too, whilst he is vacantly staring at the tapestry. He does not know that she is there till the rustle of her draperies awakens him. She passes in perfect silence, slowly, in the middle of the broad carpeted space, between the margins of white stone.

They met again that evening at dinner. So long as the men waited they talked about this thing and that. But when the dessert was on the table, and the men were gone, the Colonel handed Lady Helena the letter that we have read.

She returned it to him without a word. Her face wore an expression of the strangest indifference.

"Why, Helena!" said John Stanburne, "you haven't a word to say to me. It's far more my misfortune than my fault, and I think you might be kinder, under the circumstances, than you are."

"*Que voulez-vous que je vous dise?*"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Coffee having been announced, the Colonel, who had been sitting alone with his burgundy, and perhaps drinking a little more of it than usual, followed her ladyship into the drawing-room. That drawing-room was the most delicately-fanciful room in the whole house. It was wainscoted with cedar to the height of eight feet, where the panels terminated in a beautiful little carved arcade running all round the noble room, and following the wall everywhere into its quaint recesses. Every panel contained a conventionalised representation, inlaid in stained woods, of some plant growing in the neighbourhood of Wenderholme; and as the same plant was never twice repeated, the wainscot was in fact a great open book, of several hundred pages, illustrating the flora of the district.* The quaint little arcade

* The idea of this had been due to Mr John Stedman; and the artist who conventionalised the forms (which he did with great

above was supported on tiny columns of opaque glass made at Murano, and accurately imitating the best qualities of lapis-lazuli; whilst their bases and capitals, executed by the same clever workmen, were apparently of pure silver. The great wall-space above (for the room was twenty feet high) was covered with dark-green velvet, on which were hung a stately series of full-length portraits of great ladies who had all either belonged to the Wenderholme family itself, or to the many distinguished families with whom the Stanburnes had intermarried. The ceiling was of plaster, the design being of that intricate and elaborate character common in houses of the sixteenth century; and a visitor more observant than the majority might have remarked, at every intersection of the mouldings, the initials J. and H. (John and Helena), bound together in a sort of monogram with a knot. Heraldic decoration, used so profusely in the great hall and elsewhere, was here limited to John Stanburne's own conjugal shield, in which the arms of Stanburne were impaled with those of Basenthorpe.

It is easy for heralds to marry the armorial

judgment) owed his materials to the admirable collection of botanical drawings which had been produced by the skill and industry, and filial devotion, of poor Alice.

bearings of a gentleman and a lady by putting them side by side in the same shield, and it is easy for clergymen to join the lady and gentleman themselves in the bond of holy matrimony, —but where is the herald or the clergyman who can unite their hearts and minds as their arms are here united? And what do those bits of plaster ribbon that tie the plaster initials together signify, if J. and H. are cold or angry with each other in this, the time of their trial? What a mockery it all is, these impalements, and monograms, and knots in plaster-of-Paris!

Poor John Stanburne could endure a good deal, but he could not endure to be sulked at. On her part, Lady Helena simply believed that she was acting with an admirable combination of dignity and self-control. It was right, she knew, to restrain the expression of her anger; and as none but angry words suggested themselves to her just now, she felt that in holding her tongue she was doing what the Bible told her to do. It was a great principle of hers never to say anything that she might have to repent of afterwards, and, above all, never to put herself in the wrong by uttering anything beyond the strict truth. When she was in a rage, it was a cold rage; she never scolded, and her attack was always confined to

two or three very brief observations, whose justice it was not possible to impugn. Therefore did this lady contrive to make herself more irritating than a woman of the most explosive temperament. It is not the first time that a woman's humour has been compared to the weather, but as no simile can be better, we will use it once again. Lady Helena's temper was not like the weather of those countries where the gloom passes rapidly in a thunderstorm, but like those far more discouraging climates where a great uniform cloud spreads silently from horizon to horizon, and remains there week after week. So also, it is fair to add, did her sunshine remain long and steadily, nor could any woman be pleasanter to live with till she had some real and serious cause for anger or discouragement.

If the Colonel could only have drunk his cup of coffee in silence, or made a commonplace remark or two, and then gone straight to bed, or into his own den, it might have been better for them both; but he was stung to the quick by her ladyship's unsympathising manner, and he had absorbed so much burgundy in the dining-room as to have lost altogether that salutary fear of his wife's keen little observations which usually kept him in restraint. It was a great pity, too, that

they were alone together in the drawing-room that evening, and that Miss Stanburne had left Wenderholme two days before on a brief visit to a country house at a distance.

His heart yearned for Helena's sympathy and support, and of this she was perfectly aware; but, with that rashness which is peculiarly feminine, and which makes women play their little game of withholding what men's hearts want, even in moments of the utmost urgency and peril, she determined to give him no help until he had properly and sufficiently humiliated himself, and confessed his sins before her. The woman who *could* withhold her tenderness in such an hour as this, diminished, in doing so, the value of that tenderness itself; and every minute that passed whilst it was still withheld made such a large deduction from it, that if this coldness lasted for an hour longer, John Stanburne felt that no subsequent kindness could atone for it. As the slow, miserable minutes went by whilst Lady Helena sat yards away from him at a little table in a great oriel window, saying not one word, not even looking once in his direction, John Stanburne's brain, already in a state of intense excitement in consequence of the miseries of the day, began to suffer from an almost insane

irritability and impatience on account of the silence and calm that surrounded him. It was a most peaceful and beautiful summer evening, and the sun, as he declined towards the west, sent rich warm rays into the noble room, glowing on the cedar panels and on the quaintly-elegant furniture, with its pervading expression of luxury and ease. This luxury maddened John Stanburne, the soft carpet was hateful to his feet, the easy-chair irritating to his whole body; he hated the great clusters of flowers in the *jardinières*, and the white delicate webs that were the summer curtains. Considering the present temper of his mind, and his horror of everything that had cost him money, the drawing-room was the worst place he could have been in.

If her ladyship would just have left that interesting bit of plain hemming that she was engaged upon (and whereby she was effecting an economy of about twopence a-day), and gone to her husband and said one kind word to him, merely his name even, and given him one caress, one kiss, their fate would have been incomparably easier to endure. They would have supported each other under the pressure of calamity, and the material loss might have been balanced by a moral gain.

But she sat there silently, persistently, doing that farthing's worth of plain needlework.

"Helena!" at last the Colonel broke out, "I say, Helena, I wonder what the devil we are to do?"

"You need not swear at me, sir."

"Swear at you! — who swears at you? I didn't. But if I did swear at you, it wouldn't be without provocation. You are the most provoking woman I ever knew in my life; upon my word you are—you are, by God, Helena!"

"You are losing your temper, Colonel Stanburne. Pray remember whom you are speaking to. I am not to be sworn at like your grooms."

"You never lose *your* temper. Now, I say that as you are such a mistress of yourself under all circumstances, it's your own fault that you don't make yourself more agreeable."

"I regret that you don't think me agreeable, Colonel Stanburne."

"Well now, *are* you, Helena? Here am I under the blow of a tremendous calamity, and you haven't a word to say to me. If Fyser knew what had happened, he'd be more sorry than you are."

"What would you have me say to you? If I said all you deserve, would you listen to it?

You appear to forget that you have as yet expressed no sympathy for me, whom you have ruined by your folly, whereas you are angry because I have said little to you."

"*You* ruined, Helena!" said John Stanburne, with a bitter laugh; "*you* ruined—why, you never had anything to lose! Your father allows you six hundred a-year, and he'll continue your allowance, I suppose. You never owned a thousand pounds in your life. But it's different with me. I'm losing all I was born to."

The answer to this was too obvious for Lady Helena to condescend to make it. She remained perfectly silent, which irritated the Colonel more than any imaginable answer could have irritated him.

He certainly was wrong so far as this, that any one who *asks* for sympathy puts himself in a false position. Condolence must be freely given, or it is worthless. And any disposition which her ladyship may have felt towards a more wifely frame of mind was effectually checked by his advancing these claims of his. She was not to be scolded into amiability.

"Hang it, Helena!" he broke out, "I didn't think there was a woman in England that would behave as you are behaving under such circum-

stances. The thing doesn't seem to make the least impression upon you. There you sit, doing your confounded sewing, just as if nothing had happened, you do. You won't sit there doing your sewing long. The bailiffs will turn you out. They'll be here in a day or two."

"You are becoming very coarse, sir; your language is not fit for a woman to hear."

"It's the plain truth, it is. But women won't hear the plain truth. They don't like it—they never do. But your ladyship must be made to understand that this cannot go on. We cannot stop here, at Wenderholme. The place will be sold, and everything in it. Now, I should just like to know what your ladyship proposes to do. If my way of asking your ladyship this question isn't polite enough, please do me the favour to instruct me in the necessary forms."

"If you could speak without oaths, that would be something gained."

"Answer me my question, can't you? Where do you mean to go—what do you mean to do?"

"I intend to go to my father's."

"Well, that's plain. Why couldn't you tell me that sooner? You mean to go to old Adisham's. But I'll be hanged if I'll go there, to be patronised as a beggarly relation."

"Very well."

"Very well, is it? It's very well that you are to live in one place, and I in another."

"A distance sufficient to protect me from your rudeness would certainly be an advantage."

"Would it, indeed? You really think so, do you? Well, if you think so, it shall be so."

"Very well."

She spoke with a calmness that was perfectly exasperating, and John Stanburne's brain was too much overwrought by the terrible trial of that day for him to bear things with any patience. He was half insane temporarily; he could not bear to see that calm little woman sitting there, with her jarring self-control.

"I say, Lady Helena, if you mean to go to old Adisham's, the sooner you go the better. All this house is crumbling over our heads as if it were rotten. Confound you, if you mean to go, GO!"

Lady Helena rose quietly from her seat, took up her work, and walked towards the door. Just as she was opening it, she turned towards the Colonel, and pronounced, with the clearest possible articulation, the following sentences:—

"You will please remember, Colonel Stanburne, that it was you who turned me out of

your house, and the sort of language you used in doing so. *I* shall always remember it."

Then the door closed quietly upon her—the great heavy door, slowly moving on its smooth hinges.

The Colonel began to pace the room when she was gone, then stopping before the chimney-piece, on which the arms of Stanburne were impaled with those of Basenthorpe, he deliberately took the poker and began to strike them till the fragments of marble flew about the hearth. In five minutes every vestige of armorial bearings was effaced, but still the initials J. and H. were bound together with a true-lover's knot, over and over again, at every intersection of the ceiling.

CHAPTER XIX.

When the Colonel had defaced his alliance-shield, he felt strongly tempted to obliterate everything in Wenderholme that recorded the name or the history of the Stanburnes. If such records had been confined to a shield of arms here and there, or to an inscription, his resolve would have been carried out whilst the fever was on him, but the place was full of records by which, in the pride of assured possession, he himself had perpetuated the traditions of his house. The task of destruction was therefore far too heavy for a passing paroxysm of madness, and as John Stanburne went into his great hall, where every square foot of wall-space and ceiling and stained window bore its own record of the former lords of Wenderholme, his frenzy passed away, and was succeeded by a dark depression of spirits,

less dangerous to the persons and things about him, but equally dangerous to himself.

He walked slowly round the great hall, as a connoisseur walks round a gallery of pictures, torturing himself with a torture more painful than tyranny ever dreamed. He read over the long list of the Stanburnes who had kept their land, and handed it down generation after generation till it came to him, unworthy. One by one he looked at the shields of their alliances, and every bearing that was impaled with the arms of Stanburne reminded him of his own marriage, which had ended in such lamentable failure. The frescoes high above, now glowing dimly in the evening light, were full of manly and vigorous action, setting forth those stirring scenes of history in which the Stanburnes had worthily borne their part. In his present state of morbid self-reproach, every stalwart figure seemed to look down upon him with stern contempt or bitter accusation, saying, out of the cloud of battle, "We, in our time, served England in the place of danger, but thou, in thine, hast served her in perfect safety. There has been a great siege in thy day, and a great mutiny, but, leaving others to do the manly work, thou hast safely played at soldiering." The Colonel bitterly felt for how ridiculously small an

object he had first put himself into the meshes of embarrassment. To be a popular colonel of militia! *La belle affaire!*

It happened that the hall-door was open, as it usually was in the fine weather, and John Stanburne, without knowing it, went out upon the lawn. The balmy evening air, fragrant from the sweet breath of innumerable flowers, caressed his hot flushed face. He became gradually calmer as he walked in a purposeless way about the garden, and, looking at his mansion from many a different point of view, began to feel a strange, dreamy, independent enjoyment of its beauty, as if he had been some tourist or visitor for whom the name of Wenderholme had no painful associations. Then he passed out into the park, down the rich dark avenues whose massive foliage made a premature night, and wandered farther and farther, till, by pure accident, he came upon the carriage-drive.

A man whose mind is quite absent, and who is wandering without purpose, will, when he comes upon a road, infallibly follow it in one direction or another, not merely because it is plain before the feet, but from a deep instinct in our being which impels us to prefer some human guidance to the wilderness of nature. It happened

that the Colonel went in the direction which led him away from the house, perhaps because the road sloped invitingly that way.

Suddenly he heard a noise behind him, and had barely time to get out of the way when a carriage dashed past him at full speed, with two great glittering lamps. He caught no glimpse of its occupant, but he knew the carriage—Lady Helena's.

For a few seconds he stood immovable. Then, bounding forward, he cried aloud, "Helena! Helena!" and again and again, "Helena!"

Too late! The swift high-spirited horses were already on the public road, hurrying to catch the last train at the little station ten miles off. The sudden impulse of tenderness which drew John Stanburne's heart after her, as she passed, had no magnetism to arrest her fatal course. They had parted now, and for ever.

He would have passed that night more easily if he could have gone at once to the Cottage, and unburdened his wretchedness to his mother, and become, for his hour of weakness, a little child again in her dear presence. But he dreaded to inflict upon her the blow that in any event would only come too soon, and he resolved to leave her whatever hours might yet remain to her of peace.

Somehow he went back to the Hall, and got to his own den. The place was more supportable to him than any other in the house, being absolutely devoid of splendour. A poor man might feel himself at home *there*. He rang the bell.

"Fyser, her ladyship has been obliged to go away this evening for an absence of some days, and I mean to live here. Make up my camp-bed, will you, in that corner?"

This arrangement of the Colonel's caused some discussion amongst the servants, the butler declaring that he didn't see what was the use of gentlemen having great houses "when they could both sleep and heat in such a hole as that, which the 'ousekeeper's room was much superior, it was." But Fyser, who invariably evinced a determination that his fellow-servants should acknowledge the reasonableness of all his master's proceedings, replied, without hesitation, that the Colonel was none of your "soft swells as is worse than fine ladies for wanting things, but an old soldier, same as the Duke o' Wellington and the Hemperor o' Rooshia, as always slep' upon small military beds, to harden 'em."

It was not the first time that the Colonel had retreated in this manner to his den; for when there were no guests in the house, and her lady-

ship was away, he found himself happier there than in the great reception-rooms. I think, perhaps, in his place I should have preferred something between the two, and would have allowed myself a couple of tolerably large rooms in a pleasant part of the house; but his mind seems to have needed the reaction from the extreme splendour of new Wenderholme to a simplicity equally extreme. Here, in his den, it must be admitted that he had passed many of his happiest hours, either in making artificial flies, or in reading the sort of literature that suited him; and though the place was so crammed with things that the occupant could hardly stir, and in such a state of apparent disorder that no woman would have stayed in it ten minutes, he here found all he wanted, ready to his hand.

This night, however, not even the little camp-bed that he loved could give him refreshing sleep; and the leathern cylindrical pillow, on which his careless head had passed so many hours of perfect oblivion, became as hard to him morally as it certainly was materially. He found it utterly impossible to get rest; and after rolling and tossing an hour or two, and vainly trying to read, finished by getting up and dressing himself.

It was only one o'clock in the morning, but

the Colonel determined to go out. Unfastening a side door, he was soon in the fresh cool air.

He followed the path behind the house that led to the spot where he had made his confession to Lady Helena. A strange attraction drew him to it, and once there, he could not get away. There was no moon, and the details of the scene before him were not visible in the clear starlight, but dark mysterious shades indicated the situation of the Hall and its shrubberies, and the long avenues that led away from it.

And here, in the solitude of the hill, under the silent stars, came upon John Stanburne the hour and crisis of his agony. Until now he had not realised the full extent of his misery, and of the desolation that lay before him. He had *known* it since five o'clock in the afternoon, but he felt it now for the first time. As some terrible bodily disease lays hold of us at first with gentle hands, and causes us little suffering, but afterwards rages in us, and tears us with intolerable anguish, so it had been with this man's affliction.

His brain was in a state of unnatural lucidity, casting an electric light upon every idea that suggested itself. In ordinary life a man of common powers, he possessed, for this hour, the in-

sight and the intensity of genius. He reviewed his life with Lady Helena,—the twenty years—for it was twenty years!—that they had eaten at the same table, and lived under the same roof. And in all that long space of a thousand weeks of marriage, he could not remember a single instance in which she had been clearly in the wrong. On her side, it now seemed to him, there had always been intelligence and justice; on his side, a want of capacity to understand her, and of justice to recognise her merits. Having now, as I have said, for one hour of excitement, the clear perceptions of genius, it was plain to him where he had erred; and this perception so humbled him that he no longer dared to admit the faults which Lady Helena really had, her constant severity and her lasting *rancune*. Coming gradually to the scene of that evening in the drawing-room, the recollection of it—the full, clear recollection of every word he had used to her—smote his honest breast like the stabs of an assassin's knife. Was it possible that he, John Stanburne, had cursed his wife like a drunken boor in an ale-house? Was it possible that he had sent her away from him with language of brutal dismissal? By all the respect which he had for her, he was compelled to acknowledge

that she could neither stay with him nor come back to him after that.

Then his thoughts went to his mother, and to Edith, his beloved and only daughter. The ruin which had come upon him had wrecked their fortunes also. Old Mrs Stanburne would not have a penny in the world—her capital had all been invested in the bank, though in the Colonel's name. Her furniture would not be sold—she would not precisely be turned out of her cottage —but how was she to live? And how was Edith to live either, unless Lady Helena took her—and then what a separation! And, finally, how and where was John Stanburne himself to live?

He thoroughly realised all these things now in detail, and tormented himself by vainly seeking the solution of these problems. Then came the bitterest hour of all, that of remorse for his own folly, for his want of conjugal trust in Lady Helena, for his fatal ambition and pride. How different their life might have been if he had understood her better from the first! how different if he had lived within his means! Had he lived within his means, that great foolish *fête* would never have been given at Wenderholme, the house would not have been burned down, the money lavished on its restoration would still have

been in the Funds, and John Stanburne would have kept out of that fatal Sootythorn Bank. All his ruin was clearly traceable to that fatal entertainment, and to his expensive ways as a colonel of militia. He saw now quite clearly that there had never been any real necessity for the profuse manner in which he had thought it obligatory to do the honour of his rank. There were rich colonels and there were colonels not so rich—he might have done things well enough without going beyond his means. "If I alone suffered from it!" he cried aloud; "but Helena, and Edith, and my mother!"

Then he threw himself prostrate upon the heather, and there came not unmanly tears as he thought about those three. Helena was included in all his best and kindest thoughts, and he prayed God to bless her and watch over her always.

He prayed earnestly and long, and gradually there came a dawn of peace into his mind. And when he looked up, the natural dawn was bringing all the landscape into light, and the birds were beginning to sing in the twilight woods below.

His soul felt the serene influences of the hour, and knew something akin to hope. After this

great crisis and struggle the worst is past, and he will have strength to bear all that is to come.

He sees below him the lovely, far-stretching landscape, and the gables and turrets of Wenderholme rising dark through the early mist. All the oaks and chestnuts in the park are islanded by the mist. The drops are hanging on the heather and fern about him.

His eyes rest on the place where Lady Helena sat the day before. Suddenly he starts forward, and seizes something with strange eagerness. It is a brooch that Lady Helena lost there yesterday —a gem engraven with the pure profile of their daughter Edith. He kisses it again and again. Is it for Edith's sake only, I wonder, or are some of those kisses for Helena ?

CHAPTER XX.

At lunch-time the same day Edith came back from her visit, and the first thing she did was to go straight to the Colonel's den, having learned his whereabouts from the servants, and the fact of Lady Helena's absence.

Poor John Stanburne was just going to eat a solitary and most simple luncheon when Edith entered. The young lady had no scruples about entering this or any other retreat, however sacred. She knew herself to be a privileged intruder.

"So this is the way you live, sir, is it, when mamma and I are away? You get into your den (I hate the den!), and you sit here, and you smoke here, and you eat here, and—upon my word, what do I see now?—why, I declare, he positively *sleeps* here! He has had a bed set up in the den—his little hard camp-bed—and he is living like a hermit in his cell."

She turned her clear blue eyes full on the Colonel's face, with what was intended to be an expression of simulated contempt, but her perceptions were far too keen (especially in anything relating to her father, whom she loved with all her might) for this banter to go on under present circumstances. She saw at once that John Stanburne was anxious and sad, though as yet wholly ignorant of the cause of his anxiety.

"Dear papa, it's wrong of me to talk nonsense now; you are poorly, are you not? or else you are anxious about something? Tell me what it is. Tell Edith what it is."

Young as the girl was, John Stanburne felt what an immense relief it would be to him to talk frankly with her about his ruin. But he did not know how to begin. He did not know how to tell the heiress of Wenderholme that she was dowerless.

Her bantering way half came back again for a moment. "If I dared venture to fish for an invitation! Can you understand a hint, Monsieur le Colonel? Tiens! j'ai faim, mais bien faim; entendez-vous?"

"Well, Edith, we will have lunch in the dining-room."

"We will have nothing of the kind; we'll

have it here in the den. I like the den; it's so jolly, you know, papa."

"You said just now you hated it."

"Did I? Well, if I said so, I thought so then. But I've changed my mind since, you know.

'Bien souvent femme varie.'"

She began singing this with her clear voice, then suddenly checked herself. Her delicate feminine instincts informed her that the Colonel would be more disposed to unburden his mind here in the little den than in the state dining-room. She rang the bell, and when Fyser appeared, ordered another cover.

When the two were taking their meal together at the little table, the Colonel began his story. He told Edith frankly every detail of his history as regarded money. It was the first time she had accurately known what their position had been when it was a sound one. At last he came to the affair of the Sootythorn Bank, and Edith knew that they were ruined.

Young people have so much elasticity and hope, especially when they are sustained, as Edith was, by very strong filial affection, that they bear these trials more easily than their seniors. Besides, no girl of Edith's years, who

has been brought up in comfort, knows anything about the tragic side of money, nor is it possible for her to foresee the endless train of unpleasant consequences which follow the loss of fortune. She thinks it is a shock to be borne bravely, and she nerves herself to meet it, not realising the fact that the pressure of poverty is less of the nature of a blow or accident than of a wearing chronic disease which requires life-long patience and daily resignation. However, it is well that the evils of life should reveal themselves to us gradually; and Edith will not, in the long-run, bear her poverty the less patiently that she does not see all the consequences of it just at the first glance.

She had been sitting opposite her father, but when she knew that he was ruined, she rose and came to him, and took his head in her hands and tenderly caressed it, and kissed his brows repeatedly. "Dear father," she said, with a sweet gravity that became her even better than the gaiety she had before—"dear father, we will love you all the more, mamma and I, and we will be happy yet; you'll see we will. You mustn't make yourself miserable about what you did. You know you did for the best, papa, and there are clever men of business, such as Mr

Anison, who did just the same, and are ruined too. And as for being poor, you always live like a poor man when you are by yourself. Poor people have small rooms; isn't the den a small room?—and they have shabby furniture; isn't this furniture shabby? Are not we living here to-day just as if we were poor already? It is not so difficult, after all. And mamma and I will always love you, you know, dear papa—perhaps all the better because you are poor, and need us more."

Then she went and kneeled down by the little bed, and John Stanburne watched her with dimmed eyes. He knew that she was praying that he might have strength, and patience, and resignation. No prayer rose heavenward that day from the vast world, no prayer was uttered in heaven itself by crowned saint or interceding angel, more pure than that maiden's prayer. She asked for no personal good, but only that *he* might be comforted.

Merely to see Edith in that attitude brought calm to her father's spirit. And when she rose he drew her gently to him, and said, "The pain is over now, Edith; we must have courage, my little girl—courage."

When Fyser came in to take the things away,

the Colonel astonished him very much by beginning to talk to him, which, though he often did it when they were alone, was most unusual when either of the ladies was present.

"Fyser," he said, "I think you take in the 'Sootythorn Gazette'?"

"Yes, sir. Would you like to see it, sir?"

"If you please, but not just now. Is there anything in it to-day about the Sootythorn Bank?"

"Most terble news, sir—most terble. Bank's broke, sir, and many a one's ruined."

"Yes, I'm aware of that. Now, Fyser, I've a piece of very bad news to tell you, and which, no doubt, you will be very sorry to hear. I am one of those who are ruined by the breaking of the Sootythorn Bank. You may tell this to any one you please. You may tell it to your fellow-servants."

Poor Fyser could not grasp this all at once, and when he did, he had not words at command to express his sympathy. At last he said, "I'm sore grieved to hear it, sir. I hope your losses isn't quite so heavy as that. I hope you'll be able to meet them, sir, and still have plenty left. We might live cheaper than we do, sir."

"I believe it's real ruin, Fyser, and nothing

less. You may tell the servants. I was the largest shareholder, and shall lose everything I have. I must go to Sootythorn this afternoon."

"Will you drive four-in-hand, sir?"

"Most certainly not, nor tandem either. Have Judith put into the dog-cart."

When Fyser was gone, the Colonel said to Edith, "And now let us go together to the Cottage and tell your grandmamma."

It was harder to tell the old lady than it had been to tell the young one. The Colonel tried to break it to her gradually, by saying that he had lost some money at Sootythorn, but she was too acute to be taken in in that way. "I see how it is, John," she said—"I see how it is, quite plainly. You have been a shareholder in the Bank, and you are ruined. Poor Helena! poor Edith! Where is Helena, John?"

"She left last night for Lord Adisham's."

"*She left last night!* She was rather in haste, I think, to get out of a falling house."

"Mother, mother, Edith is here," John Stanburne whispered, deprecatingly.

"Let Edith listen, then. I say, Helena might have waited with you to comfort you. I have no patience with women who desert their post in the hour of trial."

The Colonel felt terribly punished. How could he repeat, in the presence of Edith, the words he had used to Helena? how, on the other hand, in her presence, allow her mother's conduct to be misrepresented as Mrs Stanburne was misrepresenting it?

"The fault is mainly my own, mother. I wish you and Edith to know that the fault is mainly my own. Helena intended to go to her father's, and I said she had better go soon."

Mrs Stanburne looked at her son, and saw that there had been some unpleasant discussion. She said no more, but internally was still angry with Lady Helena. She had never been more than half satisfied with her ladyship, who seemed to be only half a wife after all.

CHAPTER XXI.

When young Jacob had left Shayton on his last journey to Wenderholme, his uncle, who suspected that about this time the youth would muster courage to ask for Miss Stanburne's hand, had clapped him on the back, both in the moral sense and the physical. "Go in and win, lad—go in and win; she's a rare nice lass, is Miss Stanburne, and it'll be a rare good match for thee, lad. Why, she's good enough for a lord!"

Such were the warm encouragements that young Jacob received from his uncle. His grandmother, too, in her less demonstrative way, had implied her satisfaction with the manner in which the young gentleman had seen fit to place his affections. "What, I suppose," said Mrs Ogden, "when you've got wed to Wenderholme you'll never look upon Shayton folk again." When Mrs Ogden said this, her face beamed with gratified

pride. It is a great virtue—I mean especially, a great filial virtue—in a young man to place his affections well in the worldly sense of the word; and to love a young lady of such high position as Miss Edith, when there is a reasonable expectation of winning her, would be a credit to any young gentleman. The reader may judge, therefore, how meritorious young Jacob's attachment was considered in the Ogden family, and the high moral approval with which his virtuous conduct was regarded. For it is highly virtuous to love an eligible young lady, but not so virtuous to love an ineligible one, nor can all the clergymen in the world make a misalliance seem altogether moral.

The twelve years that have passed since we had the pleasure of seeing Mrs Ogden have not deducted from her charms. The reader has doubtless observed that, notwithstanding the law of change which governs all sublunary persons and things, there are certain persons, as there are certain things, which, relatively at least to the rest of their species, have the enviable privilege of permanence. Mrs Ogden was like those precious gems that are found in the sarcophagi of ancient kings, and which astonish us by their freshness and brilliance, when all around them

bears the impress of death and of decay. One would be tempted to exclaim, "May my old age be like hers!" were it not that advancing years, whilst deducting so little from her physical or mental vigour, have not enriched her mind with a single new idea, or corrected one of her ancient prejudices. However, though intellectual people may think there is little use in living unless life is an intellectual advance, such people as Mrs Ogden are not at all of that way of thinking, but seem to enjoy life very well in their own stationary way. There are intellectual policemen who are always telling us to "keep moving;" but what if I find a serener satisfaction in standing still? Then, if we stand still, we are to be insulted, and told that we are rusty, or that we are getting the "blue-mould." *Et après?* Suppose we *are* getting the blue-mould, what then? So far as may be ascertained by the study of such instances as Mrs Ogden, the blue-mould is a great comfort and a great safeguard to the system — it is moral flannel. Would she have lasted as she has done without it? I say, it is a solace, amidst the rapid changes of the body politic, and the new-fangled ideas which take possession of the heads of ministers, to feel that there is one personage in these realms who will

live on in vigour undiminished, yet never advance one inch. And when the British Constitution shall be finally swept away, and the throne itself no more, it will be something amidst the giddiness of universal experiment to know that in Mrs Ogden this country will still possess an example that all is not given over to mutability. It was not any proof of changeableness, either in Mrs Ogden or her son, that after Colonel Stanburne's ruin they became as strongly opposed to the alliance with his family as they had before been favourable to it.

"Now, young un," said uncle Jacob, one day at dinner at Milend, "I reckon you've been writing no letters to that lass at Wendrum; and if you've written nout, there's no 'arm done. It isn't a match for such a young felly as you, as 'll have more brass nor Stanburne iver had in his best days. We'st 'ave no weddin' wi' bankrupts' dorthers."

"Bankrupts, indeed!" said Mrs Ogden. "I reckon nout o' bankrupts! Besides, Stanburne had no need to be a bankrupt if he hadn't been such a fool. And foolishness runs i' th' blood. Like father, like dorther. Th' father's been a wastril with his money, and it's easy to see 'at the dorther 'ud be none so kerfle."

"Who shalln't have th' chance o' spendin' none o' my brass," said uncle Jacob. "Do you yer that, young un? Stanburne dorther shall spend none o' *my* brass. If you wed her, yer father 'll 'ave to keep both on ye, an' all yer chilther beside. He's worth about five hundred a-year, is your father; and I'm worth—nobody knows what I'm worth."

Young Jacob knew both his uncle and his grandmother far too intimately to attempt discussion with either of them. If anything could have strengthened his fidelity to Edith, it would have been her loss of fortune; and since the bankruptcy became public, he had been to Wenderholme again to renew his offer both to the Colonel and to the young lady herself. This journey, which had taken the form of a walk across the moor from Twistle Farm (nine miles of moorland were not enough to deter such a grouse-shooter as young Jacob), had been kept a profound secret from the authorities at Milend, who gave the young gentleman credit for a prudent withdrawal of his suit. There existed, however, between him and his father a much closer confidence and friendship; and Isaac Ogden (who, notwithstanding the errors of his earlier life, had the views and feelings of a gentleman,

as well as an especial loyalty and attachment to his unfortunate friend the Colonel) encouraged his son in his fidelity. The materials were thus accumulating for a war in the Ogden family; and whenever that war shall be declared, we may rely upon it that it will be prosecuted with great vigour on both sides, for the Ogdens are wilful people, all of them.

Mr Isaac has been enjoying excellent health for these last twelve years, thanks to his vow of total abstinence, to which he still courageously adheres. A paternal interest in the education of his son has gradually filled many of the voids in his own education, so that, without being aware of it himself, he has become really a well-informed man. His solitary existence at Twistle Farm has been favourable to the habit of study, and, like all men who have acquired the love of knowledge, he sees that life may have other aims and other satisfactions than the interminable accumulation of wealth. Small as may have been his apparent worldly success, Isaac Ogden has raised himself to a higher stand-point than his brother Jacob is likely ever to attain. Amongst the many expressions of sympathy which reached Colonel Stanburne after his disaster, few pleased him more than the following letter from Twistle Farm :—

"My dear Colonel Stanburne,—I am truly grieved to learn that the failure of the Sootythorn Bank has involved you in misfortune. I would have come to Wenderholme to say this personally, but it seemed that, under present circumstances, you might wish to be alone with your family. My boy, however, troubles you still by his visits, and I think it right that he should, in his character of lover. Pray believe that his affection for Miss Stanburne has never been in any degree influenced by the brilliance of her prospects. He has always felt a sincere esteem and attachment for her personally, which late events are not likely to weaken. We are well aware that fortune was not the only distinction between Miss Stanburne and my boy, and that other differences still remain, which leave her greatly above him. But you will forgive a father's partiality if I presume to think that my son has on his side certain qualities which may go far to compensate for the humbleness of his birth, and not the least of them is his long and devoted attachment to Miss Edith, which has hitherto had the best effect upon him by keeping his life pure, and giving him a noble desire to make himself in every way worthy of her. If you consent to their marriage, no doubt you will agree with me that it ought

not to take place just yet, but it would be a great thing for us to have your promise.—Ever, my dear Colonel, yours most faithfully,

"I. Ogden."

"*P.S.*—I hardly know how to say what I wish to add to this letter. For several years I have spent very little, and though my income is small, I find there is a considerable balance in my favour with Messrs ———. If this could be of any use to you, pray do not scruple to draw upon my bankers, who will be forewarned that you may possibly do so. Up to £1000 you would occasion me no inconvenience, and though this is not much, it might be of temporary use to you."

To this letter the Colonel returned the following reply, which is given here, as it defines the situation somewhat more clearly :—

"My dear Ogden,—Your kind letter gave me great pleasure. Both you and your boy are acting very honourably ; but for the present, *although I give my consent*, I should wish the affair to be suspended. Let them wait six months. In six months we shall all know better how we stand.

"I am greatly obliged by your friendly offer of help, which I accept as one brother officer may from another. If, as is probable, I find myself in urgent need of a little ready money, I will draw upon your bankers, but, of course, not to such an extent as would go beyond a reasonable probability of repayment.

"At the last meeting of creditors and shareholders, it appeared that, although we are likely to save nothing from the wreck, the Bank will probably pay nineteen shillings in the pound. This is a great satisfaction.—Yours most truly,

"J. STANBURNE."

CHAPTER XXII.

The Colonel would not expose himself even to the appearance of flight, but remained in the neighbourhood manfully, and went personally to Manchester before the court of bankruptcy, through which he passed very easily. His name then appeared in the Manchester papers, and in the 'Sootythorn Gazette,' in the list of bankrupts.

Bailiffs were in possession of the house and estate of Wenderholme, and Mr Jacob Ogden foreclosed his mortgages, by which he became owner of a fair portion of the land.

Finally, Wenderholme Hall and the remainder of the estate, including the Cottage, in which Mrs Stanburne still resided, were sold by auction in the large room at the Thorn Inn at Sootythorn—the very place which the Colonel's regiment of militia was accustomed to use as a mess-room.

Little had John Stanburne or his officers fore-

seen, whilst there consuming Mr Garley's substantial dinners, that the hammer of the auctioneer would one day there transfer Wenderholme from the name of Stanburne to another name—to what name?

The room was crowded. The sale was known all over Lancashire and Yorkshire. Competitors had come even from distant counties. Wenderholme had been a famous place since the fire, and the magnificent restoration which had succeeded to the fire. Drawings of it had appeared in the 'Illustrated London News,' and, since the failure of the Sootythorn Bank, the creditors had cunningly caused a volume to be made in which the whole place was fully illustrated and described. This volume they had widely circulated.

The sale had been announced for eight o'clock in the evening, and at ten minutes after eight precisely the auctioneer mounted his rostrum. He made a most elaborate speech, in which (with the help of the volume above mentioned) he went over every room in the house, describing, with vulgar magniloquence, all those glories which had cost John Stanburne so dear. He descanted with great unction upon the valuable *materials* used. For instance, in speaking of the wainscot of the great hall, he said, "This wainscot, gentlemen, is

made of solid hoak; but what sort of hoak do you think, gentlemen? Why, it's made of a sort of hoak that's so hinestimably preshis that it's used in small quantities for ladies' jewlry; and I've no doubt whatever, that if the fortunate purchaser of this wonderful place was to take all that wainscot down, and saw it into small portions fit for brooches, and suchlike hornymints, he would make his fortune out of that wainscot alone." So when he came to the velvet hanging of the drawing-room, he told the people that there was "velvet enough there, and of good enough quality, too, to make a dress for every lady in Lancashire." If anybody could have found it in his heart to be amused on such a sad occasion, he would have found rich entertainment in that speech, especially when it attempted to describe, in technical language, the details of the architecture and carving, and the frescoes, and the tapestries. Where he picked up the following bit about Michael Angelo, nobody knows:—

"The great 'all, gentlemen, is painted in fresco, by the first artists, representin' scenes of our glorious English 'istry in which the Stanburnes has took their part. A fresco-paintin', gentlemen, is much superior to a hile-paintin'—as much superior, I should say, as a hile-paintin' is to a

water-colour drawin'. The great Michael Hangelo" (here the speaker paused, and looked round him with the air of a man backed by irresistible authority)—"the great Michael Hangelo was accustomed to say that fresco-paintin' was fit work for a man, whereas hile-paintin', in comparison, was only fit for women. I say nothin' about the hile-paintin's at Wenderholme, gentlemen, because they will be sold, along with the furniture, in a separate hauction."

There was one person present to whom the description can hardly have been very agreeable. John Stanburne himself, from anxiety to know the future possessor, and the amount realised, had quietly entered the room unperceived, for every one was looking at the auctioneer. He had stationed himself near the wall, and there bore the infliction of this torture, his hat over his eyes. To hear a vulgar orator descant on the beauties of one's home, in order to raise the biddings, is not very delightful.

At length all this eloquence had run dry, and the business of the evening began. The place was put up at £30,000, and no bid was to be made of less than £1000 over its predecessor. The first two or three bids were made by persons with whom this history has no concern, but that for

£35,000 was made by our friend Mr John Stedman. Some one present called out "thirty-six," on which Mr Stedman replied "thirty-seven," and there he ceased to bid. He knew that this was the value of the remaining estate;* he did not want the house. Philip Stanburne whispered something in his ear, after which he cried "forty-two," the last bid having been forty-one. After that he made no further offer, and Philip Stanburne's countenance fell.

The bidding hitherto had been strictly of the nature of investment. Considered as an investment, the remaining property of Wenderholme was worth about £40,000. But now the seekers after an eligible investment retired from the field, except one or two dealers in estates who intended to sell the place again, at a profit, by private contract, and who looked upon its architectural and other beauties as marketable qualities. These men went on to £47,000. The place had now reached what was called a "fancy price."

There was a man of rather short stature, with fair hair, a closely-shaven face, a greasy cap on his head, a velveteen jacket on his back, and the

* The reader will remember that the best part of the estate had been mortgaged to Mr Jacob Ogden.

rest of his person clothed in old corduroy. Fluffs of cotton were sticking about him, and he presented the general appearance of a rather respectable operative. He stood immediately before Philip Stanburne, who did not see his face, and was rather surprised to hear him call out "forty-eight."

"Forty-eight, gentlemen!" cried the auctioneer; "going at forty-eight thousand—forty-nine? Forty-nine — going at forty-nine! Come, who says fifty? — we must round the number, you know, gentlemen — who says fifty? Going, going — forty-nine — only forty-nine, going—going——"

The man in the greasy cap said "fifty," and the auctioneer, after the usual delays, hearing no other voice amidst the breathless silence of the room, struck the decisive blow with his little hammer, and Wenderholme was sold.

Then the auctioneer beckoned to him the man in the greasy cap, and said in broad Lancashire, and in a tone of somewhat contemptuous familiarity, "You mun go and tell them as sent you here as they'll have to pay hup one-third as deposit-money. One-third o' fifty thousand pound is sixteen thousand six hundred and sixty-

six pound, thirteen and fourpence, and that's what them as sent you here has got to pay hup. You can recklect that. It's all sixes, nobbut the one to start wi' and th' odd shillings."

The man in the greasy cap smiled quietly, and took out an old pocket-book. "You've got a pen and ink?"

"I'll write it down for ye, if ye like. And stop—tell me th' name o' them as sent ye."

"There's no need; you'll know it soon enough." And the man in the greasy cap took out a cheque-book, wrote a cheque, filled it, signed it, crossed it, and handed it to the auctioneer. The name signed was "Jacob Ogden," now owner of Wenderholme.

When the auctioneer perceived his error (for the name of Ogden was now mighty in the land), he was covered with confusion, and profuse in perspiration and apology. Jacob affected to forgive him, but in truth he had little to forgive, for no incident could have been more exquisitely agreeable to his feelings. To stand there in public, and in the dress he usually wore at the mill, to sign a heavy cheque, to buy a fine estate, to feel himself the most important man in the room, to be, in his greasy cap and velveteen jacket, the

envied man, the observed of all observers, was for him a triumph sweeter than is the triumph of some fair lady, who, in her diamonds and her lace, and her exquisite cleanliness, shines in some great assembly with the purity of a lily and the splendour of a star.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mrs Ogden was sitting up for her son Jacob that night, and she had prepared him a little supper of toasted cheese. She had no positive knowledge of the object of his journey to Sootythorn. She was aware that Wenderholme would be sold by auction one of these days, but she did not know exactly whether her son intended to bid for it. There was not much talk generally between the two about the great financial matters —their money-talk ran chiefly upon minutiæ, such as the wages of a servant or the purchase of a cow.

Notwithstanding the great increase of their riches, the mother and son still lived at Milend in their old simple manner. Mrs Ogden still made all Jacob's shirts and stockings, and still did a great deal of the cooking. The habits of her life had been formed many years before, and

she could not endure to depart from them, even when the departure would have been an increase to her comfort. Thus she continued to keep only one girl as a servant, and did most of the work of the house with her own hands. Her happiness depended upon abundance and regularity of occupation; and she acted much more wisely in keeping up the activity of her habits, even though these habits may have been in themselves somewhat inconsistent with her pecuniary position, than she would have done if she had exposed herself to the certain *ennui* of attempting to play the fine lady. Indeed I am convinced that one great secret of her "conservation" lay precisely in the amount of bodily work she went through, for an active woman will outlast an idle one, and many a lady has "died of having nothing to do."

The girl was gone to bed when Jacob Ogden came back from Sootythorn, and his mother was seated by the kitchen-fire, darning one of his stockings and superintending the toasted cheese. The kitchen at Milend was a clean and spacious room, with stone floor nicely sanded, and plenty of hams and oatcakes hanging from the ceiling. There was a great clock too in one corner, with shining case, and a rubicund figure above the dial, by which were represented the phases of the moon.

The old lady had laid out a small supper-table in the kitchen, and when Jacob came back she told him he was to have his supper there, "for th' fire 'ad gone out i' th' parlour."

So he sat down to eat his toasted cheese, which was a favourite supper of his, and whilst he was eating, his mother took a little oatmeal-porridge with treacle. She rather feared the effects of toasted cheese, believing porridge to be more easily digested.

Neither one nor the other said anything about the object of the journey to Sootythorn during supper, and there was nothing in Jacob's face to indicate either extraordinary news or unusual elation. In fact, so accustomed was Jacob Ogden to purchasing estates that he had little of that feeling of elation which attends the young beginner; and after that momentary triumph at Garley's Hotel, any excitement which he may have felt had subsided, and left in his mind no other feeling than the old spirit of calculation. It was the very first time in his life that he had gone beyond the principle of investment, and paid something over and above for the mere gratification of his fancy or his pride, and his reflections were not of unmixed self-congratulation. "Anyhow," he said to himself, "it'll be Ogden of Wendrum, J.P."

However late Jacob Ogden took his supper, he must necessarily smoke his pipe after it (one pipe), and drink his glass of grog. His mother usually went to bed as soon as the water boiled, but this evening she kept moving about in the kitchen, first finding one little thing to set to rights, and then another. At last she stood still in the middle of the floor, and said,—

"Our Jacob!"

"What, mother?"

"Wherestabeen?" *

"Why, you knoan that weel enough, I reckon. I'n been Sootythorn road."

"And what 'as ta been doin'?"

"Nowt nobbut what's reet." †

"What 'as there been at Sootythorn?"

"There's been a sale."

"'An ‡ they been sellin' a mill?"

"Noah."

"And what *'an* they been sellin'?"

"Wendrum 'All."

"And who's bout it?"

"I have."

"And what 'an ye gin for't?"

"Fifty thousand."

"Why, it's ta mich by th' 'auve!"

* Where hast thou been. † Nothing but what is right. ‡ Have.

"Appen."

Notwithstanding the laconic form of the conversation, Mrs Ogden felt a strong desire to talk over the matter rather more fully, and to that end seated herself on the other side the kitchen-fire.

"Jacob," she said, as she looked him steadily in the face, "I never knew thee part wi' thy brass b'out five pussent. How will ta get five pussent out o' Wendrum 'All for thy fifty thousand?"

"Why, mother, there's investments for brass, and there's investments for pasition. I don't reckon to get so much interest out o' Wendrum, but it'll be Ogden o' Wendrum, J.P."

"Well, now, Jacob, that's what I call spendin' your money for pride!" Mrs Ogden said this solemnly, and in as pure English as she could command.

"Why, and what if it is? There's plenty more where that coom from. What signifies?"

"And shall you be going to live at Wendrum 'All, Jacob? *I* willn't go there—indeed I willn't; I'll stop at Milend. Why, you'll require ever so many servants. They tell me there's thirty fires to light! And what will become o' the mill when you're over at Wendrum?"

Mrs Ogden's face wore an expression of trouble

and dissatisfaction. Her eyebrows rose higher than usual, and her forehead displayed more wrinkles. But Jacob knew that this was her way, and that in her inmost soul she was not a little gratified at the idea of being the Lady of Wenderholme. For as an ambitious ecclesiastic, promoted to the episcopal throne, rejoices not openly, but affects a decent unwillingness and an overwhelming sense of the responsibilities of his office, so Mrs Ogden, at every advance in her fortunes, sang her own little *nolumus episcopari.*

"Why, it's thirty miles off, is Wendrum," she went on, complainingly; "and there's no railway; and you'll never get there and back in a day. One thing's plain, you'll never manage the mill and the estate too."

"All the land between this 'ere mill and Wendrum 'All is mine," said Jacob, with conscious dignity; "and I mean to make a road, mother, across the hill from the mill to Wendrum 'All. It'll be nine mile exactly. And I'll have a telegraph from th' countin'-house to my sittin'-room at Wendrum. And I shall take little Jacob into partnership, and when one Jacob's i' one spot t'other Jacob 'll be i' t'other spot. Recklect there's two Jacobs, mother."

"Well, I reckon you'll do as you like, whatever

I say. But *I*'ll go non to Wendrum. I'll stop 'ere at Shayton while I live (it 'appen willn't be for long)—I'm a Shayton woman bred and born.

"Nonsense, mother. You'll go to Wendrum, and ride over to Milend in your carriage!"

Mrs Ogden's face assumed an expression of unfeigned amazement.

"A cayridge! a cayridge! Why, what is th' lad thinkin' about now! I think we shall soon be ridin' into prison. Did ever anybody hear the like?"

There is a curious superstition about carriage-keeping which Mrs Ogden fully shared. It is thought to be the most extravagant, though the most respectable, way of spending money; and an annual outlay which, if dissipated in eating and drinking, or Continental tours, would excite no remark, is considered extravagance if spent on a comfortable vehicle to drive about in one's own neighbourhood. Thus Mrs Ogden considered her son's proposition as revolutionary—as an act of secession from the simplicity of faith and practice which had been their rule of life and the tradition of their family. In short, it produced much the same effect upon her mind as if the Shayton parson had proposed to buy a gilded dalmatic and chasuble.

"There's folk," said Mrs Ogden, with the air of an oracle—"there's folk as are foolish when they are young, and grow wiser as they advance in years. But there's other folk that is wise in their youth, to be foolish and extravagant at an age when they ought to know better." She evidently was losing her faith in the prudence of her son Jacob. When they had parted for the night, and Mrs Ogden got into her bed, the last thing she uttered as she stood with her nightcap on, in her long white night-gown, was the following brief ejaculation :—

"A cayridge! a cayridge! What are we comin' to now!"

But the last thing uncle Jacob thought, as he settled his head on his lonely pillow, was, "It'll be Ogden of Wendrum, J.P."

CHAPTER XXIV.

We return to Garley's Hotel at the conclusion of the sale.

Philip Stanburne had recognised the Colonel, and gone up to him to shake hands. He had not seen him before since the downfall of the Sootythorn Bank, though he had written a very feeling letter, in which he had begged his friend to make use of Stanithburn Peel so long as he might care to remain in Yorkshire. Indeed the Colonel had received many such letters.

Mr Stedman, on looking about for Philip, saw him with the Colonel, and joined them.

"Where are you staying, Colonel Stanburne?" asked Mr Stedman.

"I have been staying with my mother lately at Wenderholme Cottage. I have persuaded her to remain there. It is better, I think, that an old lady should not be obliged to change all her

habits. I hope the new owner will allow her to remain. She will have very good neighbours in the Prigleys. I gave the living of Wenderholme to Mr Prigley when the old vicar died, about three months since. He used to be the incumbent of Shayton."

"It will be a great advance for Mr Prigley. Shayton was a poor living, but I have heard that Wenderholme is much better."

"Wenderholme is worth seven hundred a-year. The Prigleys have been very poor for many years, with their numerous family and the small income they had at Shayton. I am very glad," the Colonel added, with rather a melancholy smile, "that I was able to do this for them before my own ill-luck overtook me. A few months later I should have missed the chance."

"Do you return to Wenderholme to-night? It is late, is it not?"

"No; I mean to sleep here in the hotel."

"Would you accept a bed at Chesnut Hill, Colonel Stanburne? Philip is staying with me."

The Colonel was only too glad to spend the rest of his evening with two real friends, and they were soon in the comfortable dining-room at Chesnut Hill. The Colonel had often met Mr Stedman, who had stayed once or twice for a night

or two at Wenderholme; and he had dined a few times at Chesnut Hill, and had stayed all night, so that the house was not altogether strange to him; though, since he had repeatedly met with Mr Stedman at Sootythorn and at Stanithburn Peel (where during the last twelve years he had been a frequent visitor), he knew the owner of the mansion much more intimately than the mansion itself.

Ever since the death of poor Alice, a warm friendship had united her father and Philip Stanburne—a friendship which had been beneficial to them both. Each was still sincerely attached to his own convictions, but the great sorrow which they had suffered in common had drawn them together, and Mr Stedman considered the younger man as nearly related to him as if the intended marriage had actually taken place. Their loss had been of that kind which time may enable us to accept as an inevitable void in our existence, but which no amount of habit can ever obliterate from the memory. Philip still remembered that conversation with Alice in which she had begged him not to desert her father in his old age; and Mr Stedman, on his part, felt that every kindness which he could show to the man whom his daughter had loved was a kindness to Alice herself. So

there was a paternal and filial tie between these two; and though, after Alice's death, Philip had resumed his solitary existence at Stanithburn, and Mr Stedman continued his business as a cotton-manufacturer (for he felt the need of some binding occupation), they made use of each other's houses, as is done by the nearest relatives; and Mr Stedman spent many a summer day in botanising about Stanithburn, whilst his friend, when on duty in the militia, always billeted himself at Chesnut Hill.

"What is the last news about our poor friend Anison?" the Colonel asked, when the three were comfortably seated in Mr Stedman's easy-chairs.

"It cannot be very good news, but it is as good as can be expected. His works and Arkwright Lodge were sold by auction three days since, at Whittlecup."

"And who bought them?"

"The same man, Colonel Stanburne, who purchased Wenderholme this evening—Jacob Ogden of Shayton."

"They must be rich, those Ogdens. I know his brother Isaac very well, and his nephew is a great friend of mine, but I really know nothing of this Jacob."

"He is the only rich one in the family, but he

is a rich one. He made a great bargain at Whittlecup. He gave twenty thousand for Anison's works, with everything in them in working order; and to my certain knowledge, Joseph Anison had a capital of thirteen thousand sunk in copper rollers alone.* He paid four thousand for Arkwright Lodge. It's dirt cheap. The house alone cost more than that, and there's thirty acres of excellent land. I wish I'd bought it myself. I missed it by not going to that sale; but Philip and I wanted to bid for Wenderholme, and we stayed away from Whittlecup so as to keep out of temptation."

"And what do you think Mr Anison will do?"

"He asked Jacob Ogden to let him remain at Whittlecup and manage the works for a very moderate salary, but Jacob declined; and in doing so he did what I never heard of him doing before—he acted directly against his own interest. He'll never get such a manager as Anison would have been, but he refused him out of spite. Twelve years ago Madge Anison jilted Jacob Ogden, just when my daughter died. He made her pay up a thousand for breach of promise.

* The engraved copper rollers used in calico-printing. The larger printing firms sink immense sums in these rollers, far surpassing the above estimate for Mr Anison, who was only in a moderate way of business.

She's an old maid now, or something very like one, for she's over thirty-three; but Jacob Ogden hasn't forgiven her for jiltin' him, and never will. Last news I had of Joseph Anison, he was seeking a situation in Manchester, and his three girls 'll have to seek situations too. It's a bad job there isn't one of 'em married—they were as fine lasses as a man need set his eyes on, and in their father's good time they'd scores of offers, but either they looked too high or else they were very difficult to suit, for they never hooked on, somehow."

Philip Stanburne knew rather more about Madge Anison by this time than Mr Stedman did, and could have enlightened his friends concerning her had he been so minded. The young lady had thrown Jacob Ogden over, as the reader is already aware, for no other purpose than to leave herself free for Philip Stanburne on his return from the Continent after the death of Alice. When he visited his friends at Arkwright Lodge, Miss Anison had not had the degree of prudence necessary to conceal her designs, and Philip (to his intense disgust, for all his thoughts were with the gentle creature he had so recently lost) perceived that he was the object which Margaret had in view. A young lady can scarcely

commit a greater mistake than to make advances to a man so saddened as Philip was then; for in such a condition of mind he has not the buoyancy of spirit necessary for a flirtation, and it is only through a flirtation that he can be led to pay his addresses in earnest. Of course there are flirtations of many kinds, and under melancholy circumstances the young lady may adapt it to the circumstances. But, however well she manages it, if once the man finds her out, he is quite sure to feel repelled, if a recent loss like Philip Stanburne's has depressed his heart and overclouded his imagination. And so it had come to pass in this instance. Poor Margaret had fatally under-estimated the duration of Philip Stanburne's sorrow, and also the keenness of his perceptions. For instead of his being less observant and easier to manage than he had been before that episode in his life, it had so wrought upon his intellect and his feelings as to be equivalent to the experience of years. In a word, her project had ended in total failure, and the sense of this failure gave a certain petulance and irritability to her manner, and lent a sharpness of sarcasm to her tongue, which did not induce other gentlemen to aspire to that happiness which Philip had refused. So she was Margaret Anison still, and at the present

period of our story was trying, not very successfully, to obtain a situation in Manchester.

It was Mr Stedman's custom, as in Lancashire it is the custom of his class, to have a little supper about nine or ten o'clock—a pleasant and sociable meal, though not always quite suitable to persons of feeble digestion. Colonel Stanburne, on the other hand, according to the custom of *his* class, dined substantially at seven, and took nothing later except tobacco-smoke. This evening, however, he was in a position to conform to the custom of Chesnut Hill; for though he had dined at Mr Garley's an hour before the time fixed for the sale, he had felt so melancholy about it, and so anxious to know who would be the future possessor of his home, that he had eaten a very poor dinner indeed. But now that the thing was decided, and that he found himself with two such kind and faithful friends (whose manner to him was exactly the same as it had been in the days of his prosperity), John Stanburne's naturally powerful appetite reasserted itself at the expense of Mr Stedman's cold roast-beef, which, with plenty of pickles and mashed potatoes, formed the staple of the repast.

The Colonel was already beginning to learn the great art of miserable men—the art which enables

them to gain in hours of comparative happiness the energy and elasticity necessary for future times of trial—the art of laying unhappiness aside like a pinching boot, and of putting their weary feet into the soft slippers of a momentary contentment. Wenderholme was sold—it belonged to Mr Jacob Ogden; why think of Wenderholme any more? The Colonel actually succeeded in dismissing the matter from his thoughts for at least five minutes at a time, till a sort of pang would come upon his heart, and he rapidly asked himself what the pang meant, and then he knew that it meant Wenderholme.

One very curious consequence of the great event of that day was this, that whereas the last time he had been to Chesnut Hill (in the days of his prosperity) the place had seemed to him both vulgar and unenviable, he now appreciated certain qualities about the place which before had been by him altogether imperceptible. For example, when he was rich, mere comfort had never been one of his objects. Having the power to create it wherever he might happen to be, he had often done very well without it, and his rooms in barracks, or his den in his own mansion, had been often very destitute thereof. But now that it had become highly probable that comfort would soon

be beyond his reach, he began to awaken to a perception of it. The warm red flock-paper on Mr Stedman's dining-room wall, the good carpet on the floor, the clean white table-cloth, the comfortable morocco-covered chairs—all these things began to attract his attention in quite a novel and remarkable manner. And yet hitherto he had continued to live like a gentleman, therefore, what will it be, I wonder, when he is reduced a good deal lower in the world?

Another reflection that perpetually haunted him was a pestering thought about Mr Stedman's ownership of Chesnut Hill. Of course he had always known that Mr Stedman was the owner of that little property, but he had never given the matter a thought, because all the people whom he knew were owners of property of some sort, and it seemed to Colonel Stanburne as natural that a man should own the house he lived in as the hat upon his head. But now he began to perceive that the absolute ownership of one's domicile is in itself rather an enviable privilege, and that to have such a domicile as Chesnut Hill (though not comparable to stately Wenderholme) is a thing upon which a sensible man may congratulate himself as he sits at the head of his mahogany. In short, our friend the Colonel was beginning to

receive some of the lessons of adversity, and was just opening his eyes to certain facts that are very familiar to the poor. I am far, however, from desiring to imply that poor men know the "realities of life" and the rich don't—the truth is, that the poor know one set of realities and the rich another. It had been the Colonel's lot hitherto to study the rich man's realities only, and now he was going to complete the circle of his experience by learning the poor man's realities—by learning, I mean, to appreciate such things as the value of a common-looking house and a small estate.

When they had done supper, and were drinking the inevitable grog, Mr Stedman said to the Colonel,—

"I hope you will forgive me if I am guilty of any indiscretion, Colonel Stanburne, but you know you are with sincere friends. May I ask what your own plans are?"

Mr Stedman's age, and his evident goodwill, made the question less an indiscretion than an acceptable proof of kindness, and the Colonel took it in that way. "My dear Mr Stedman," he said in answer, "you know a position like mine is very embarrassing. I am getting on in life—I mean I am getting oldish; I never had a profession by which money could be earned, you know, though

I have been in the army, but that's not a trade to live by. As to the colonelcy of the militia, the lord-lieutenant has my resignation. No, I can't see anything very clearly just now. The only thing I'm fit for is driving a public coach."

Philip Stanburne said, "Why did you refuse to come and live at the Peel? You would have been very welcome—you would be welcome still." It was already publicly understood that the Colonel and Lady Helena were separated, and that Miss Stanburne would either follow her ladyship to Lord Adisham's, or remain with her old grandmother.

"My dear Philip," the Colonel said, very sadly and affectionately, laying his hand on Philip's hand—"my dear Philip, if I were quite old and done for, I would have no false pride. I would come to the Peel and live with you, and you should buy me a suit of clothes once every two years, and give me a little tobacco, and a sovereign or two for pocket-money. I would take all this from you. But you see, Philip, though I'm not a clever man, and though I really have no profession, still my bodily health and strength are left to me, thank God; and so long as I have these, I think it is my duty to try in some way to earn my living for myself. You know that

Helena and I are separated—everybody seems to know it now. Well, I got a letter from her father this morning, in which—but stop, I'll show you the letter itself. Will you read it, Mr Stedman?"

"DEAR SIR,—My daughter Helena desires me to say to you, that as you shared your means with her in the time of your prosperity, so it is her desire that you should share her income now in your adversity. A sum of three hundred a-year will therefore be paid to your credit at any banker's you may be pleased to name.—Your obedient servant, ADISHAM."

"Well," said Mr Stedman, "you may still live very comfortably as a single man on such an income as three hundred a-year. It is a great deal of money."

"I have accepted lady Helena's offer, but not for myself. I will not touch one penny of Lord Adisham's allowance. I have told the banker to pay it over to my mother, whom I have ruined. She has not a penny in the world. However, you see Helena is provided for, since she is living at Lord Adisham's (a very good house to live in), and my mother is provided for, and between

them they will keep Edith till I can do something for her; so my mind is easy about these three ladies, and I've nobody to provide for but myself. Any man with a sound constitution ought to be able to earn his bread. You see, Philip, my mind is made up. There is still, notwithstanding my misfortune, a spirit of independence in me which will not permit me to live upon the kindness of my friends. But I am very greatly obliged both to you and others—to you more especially."

"Well, Colonel, haven't I a right to offer you some assistance? Are we not relations?"

The Colonel looked at Philip with tender affection, and gently pressed his hand. Then he said to Mr Stedman: "This young friend of yours never called me a relation of his when I was prosperous, but now when I am a poor man he claims me. Isn't he an eccentric fellow, to lay claim to a poor relation?"

The next morning at breakfast-time the Colonel did not appear. The servant said he had risen very early, and left a note.

"My dear and kind Friends,—I came to a decision in the middle of the night, but will

not just now tell you what it is. The decision having been come to, I am determined to act upon it at once, and leave Chesnut Hill to catch the early train. Pray excuse this, and believe me, with much gratitude for all your kindness, yours most truly,

"JOHN STANBURNE."

CHAPTER XXV.

The sale of the furniture, &c., at Wenderholme took place in a few days, and was well attended. It is unnecessary in this place to tell the reader who bought this thing or that, because, so far as the results of the sale are likely to have any interest for him, he will become acquainted with them in due time.

As for the Colonel himself, nobody knew where he was. He had remained in the neighbourhood of Wenderholme so long as honour required him to remain, and when he departed, had taken literally nothing with him but the clothes upon his back. He wrote a few letters from the waiting-room of the railway station at Manchester, in which he said good-bye to his friends—amongst others to Fyser, his attached personal servant; but not one of these letters gave the least clue to his intentions. At Manchester he bought a com-

mon carpet-bag, and a comb and brush, and a tooth-brush, and a few socks and shirts; and a person who knew him by sight saw him holding this carpet-bag in his hand and go to take a third-class ticket, but for what place he did not ascertain. However, as Philip Stanburne said, there was no occasion for anybody to feel uneasy about the Colonel, who had come out of the first shock of adversity's cold bath in a fine glow of reaction, and would be sure, wherever he went, to lead an honourable and manly life, though it was in the highest degree improbable that he would be able to enrich himself by his efforts.

The Colonel had drawn upon Mr Isaac Ogden for the sum of fifty pounds, and this was all the money he took with him. The money paid to his credit by Lord Adisham had, by his request, been transferred to his mother's account; and, by a fiction necessary under the circumstances, that lady was made to believe that she was only partially ruined, and that she still possessed about seven thousand pounds, of which the Adisham stipend was the interest. She remained just as usual at Wenderholme Cottage; and though the change of owners was of course a bitter grief for her, there was no material disturbance in the tranquil sequence of her habits. She sat in the

same room and looked on the same landscape from her window; she dined at the same table, and not a single object about her was disturbed. In this way—at least, so long as she remained at the Cottage, and did not go near the great house—it was possible, and indeed easy, for her mind to accept the pleasant illusion that nothing had been changed; and as, like all elderly people, she lived a great deal in the past, her mind anchored itself amongst old and familiar associations, and only recurred, though it recurred frequently, to recent changes and recent miseries.

It was a great piece of good fortune to the lonely old lady that the Prigleys had come to live at the vicarage of Wenderholme. The vicarage was in the village, outside the park, but the church was just within the park, having been erected by the Stanburnes, at their sole cost, shortly after the Reformation. The distance from the vicarage to Wenderholme Cottage was scarcely three-quarters of a mile, and the Prigleys were therefore exceedingly near neighbours. Notwithstanding the little failings of the parson's wife, her habit of telling white fibs, her pretension to universal information, and her real and deep ignorance, she was a great acquisition to Mrs Stanburne, who soon appreciated her good qualities.

Indeed, in Mrs Stanburne's society, Mrs Prigley's weak dread of avowing her ignorance soon began to give way to a feeling at once more humble and more self-respecting. The elder lady was so simple in her manners, and so genuine, so ready to avow the imperfection of her own knowledge, that Mrs Prigley, who looked up to her as a superior being, found out (though somewhat late in life) that a woman is not expected to know *very* much. In fact, if Mrs Prigley had taken half the pains to acquire information that she had done to dissimulate the want of it, she would have been quite a learned lady by this time. She was one of those ladies, common in places where there is not much social intercourse, who show much more to their advantage in relations of perfect intimacy than in their occasional appearances in the world; and Mrs Stanburne's kindness soon made her feel so much at home that she became natural and truthful at the Cottage. Besides, the great increase in the family income had done good to Mrs Prigley's mind, by relieving her from many anxieties, and from the necessity of many little artifices which a very poor gentlewoman is condemned to, and which absorb and narrow the intellect. She felt so grateful to the Colonel for having given them the living, and to Mrs Stan-

burne for her neighbourly kindness, that she quite won Mrs Stanburne's heart, and a firm affection grew rapidly between the two ladies, which, under the altered situation at Wenderholme, made the place more endurable to both of them. The reader will remember that though Mrs Prigley had been a Miss Stanburne of Byfield, the Byfield Stanburnes were quite a recent branch of the Wenderholme family, and that Mrs Prigley's interest in the house from which she sprang was of the strongest and warmest kind. It will therefore be easily understood that the Colonel's ruin, and the sale of Wenderholme to "those nasty Ogdens," as she did not scruple to call them, was one of the very bitterest things that Fate had ever required her to accept. To have come to live at Wenderholme, with the independence which the vicarage gave them, and the hope of a recognised position as relations of the Colonel and Lady Helena—then, just at the very moment of fruition, to see the whole place sold, and the Colonel a wanderer, and Lady Helena a separated wife, was a terrible disappointment to Mrs Prigley. Think what a difference it made in her position!—what a difference there was between being simple vicaress of Wenderholme under the Ogdens, and vicaress with the footing of a near and

acknowledged relation, in a great mansion governed by a ladyship! It is certain that Mrs Prigley would have felt the Colonel's ruin far less acutely if she had remained at Shayton, nor was the comparative magnificence of the vicar's income enough to diminish her regrets. The increase of income, and the missing of that social position of which the Colonel's ruin had deprived her, were two entirely distinct things; and although it had happened to Mrs Prigley, as it happens to most of us, that her piece of good fortune had been swiftly followed by a piece of evil fortune, she could not balance the account between the two.

The Ogdens had not yet come to live at Wenderholme—indeed, Mrs Ogden had not been near the place since it was purchased; but her son Jacob had been over one day in a gig, and, in the course of his stay of a few hours, had settled more points of detail than a country gentleman would have settled in a month. He planted an agent there, and took on several of Colonel Stanburne's outdoor servants, including all his gamekeepers, but for the present did not seem inclined to make any use of Wenderholme as a residence. He had been present at the sale of the furniture, where he had bought everything belonging to the principal rooms, except a few old cabinets and chairs,

and other odd matters, of which the reader may hear more in a future chapter.

It had always been a characteristic of the Ogdens not to be in a hurry to enjoy. They would wait, and wait, for any of the good things of this world—perhaps to prolong the sweet time of anticipation, perhaps simply because the habit of saving, so firmly ingrained in their natures, is itself a habit of waiting and postponing enjoyment in favour of ulterior aims. But in the case of Wenderholme, the habit of postponing a pleasure was greatly helped by an especial kind of pride. Both Jacob Ogden and his mother were proud to a degree which may sometimes have been equalled, but can never have been surpassed, by the proudest chiefs of the aristocracy. Their pride, as I have said, was of a peculiar kind, and consisted far more in an intense satisfaction with themselves and their own ways, than in any ambition to be thought, or to become, different from what they were. Now, it would not have been possible to imagine anything more exquisitely agreeable to this pride of theirs than that Wenderholme Hall should be *treated as an appendage to Milend*, that the great kitchen-gardens at Wenderholme should

supply vegetables, and the hothouse grapes, to the simple table in the little plain house at Shayton. It was delightful to Mrs Ogden to be able to say, in a tone of assumed indifference or semi-disapproval, "Since our Jacob bought Wenderholme, he's always been wishin' me to go to see it—and they say it's a very fine place—but I don't want to go to see it; Milend is good enough for me." If the hearer expressed a natural degree of astonishment, Mrs Ogden was inwardly delighted, but showed no sign of it on her countenance. On the contrary, her eyebrows would go up, and the wrinkles upon her forehead would assume quite a melancholy appearance, and her stony grey eyes would look out drearily into vacancy. In short, the impression which both Jacob Ogden and his mother wished to produce upon all their friends and acquaintances after the purchase of Wenderholme was, that the mansion and estate of the Stanburnes could add nothing to the importance of the family at Milend.

So pleasant was it to Mrs Ogden to be able to say that she had not been to Wenderholme since it was a blackened ruin, that although she burned with curiosity to behold its magnificence, she restrained herself month after month. Mean-

while her son Jacob was getting forward very rapidly with a project he had entertained for twelve years—that is, ever since the idea of purchasing Wenderholme had first shaped itself in his mind—the road from his mills in Shayton to the house at Wenderholme, direct across the moors. He set about this with the energy of a little Napoleon (Emerson tells us that the natural chiefs of our industrial classes are all little Napoleons), and in a few weeks the road existed. Posts were set up on the side of it, and a telegraphic wire connected the counting-house at Ogden's Mill with a certain little room in Wenderholme Hall, which he destined for his private use.

The reader is already aware (from a conversation between Mrs Ogden and her son) that he entertained the idea of taking young Jacob into partnership. In the course of nature the youth would inherit a large amount of mill-property, and it was therefore most desirable that he should at least pass some years in the trade, so as to be thoroughly conversant with its details. Whether he would remain an active tradesman in after years must, of course, depend upon his own tastes and determinations. The experiment tried with young Jacob, of preceding the practical life

of a cotton-manufacturer by an advanced literary education, is an experiment which, during the last twelve years, has been tried in hundreds of instances. The common result of it appears to be, that either the young men so prepared rapidly forget the education which they have received, and return to hereditary barbarism, speaking once again the maternal Lancashire dialect, and thinking the sort of thoughts which that rude but emphatic language is able to express; or else they remain cultivated gentlemen, and either abandon trade altogether, or superintend it in a manner very different from the unrelaxing vigilance by which their fortunes were originally founded. And, so far as we can judge by what has happened in many other cases, it appears most probable that young Jacob will never carry into trade that concentrated energy and intense keenness of vision which have made his uncle so pre-eminently successful. For that attachment to Edith Stanburne will prevent young Jacob from falling into Shayton barbarism, and Shayton barbarism (or something very like it) is a far better state for a cotton-manufacturer—I mean, a state far more conducive to his pecuniary success—than Oxonian culture and refinement. What Oxford dignitary could manage all that Jacob Ogden

personally manages — his enormous mills, his hundreds of cottages, his wide estates, his endless works of improvement? Jacob Ogden knows nothing of the higher mathematics, but he would be a clever man who could cheat him of five pounds. And I don't mean five pounds of *money* in a cash account—that sort of cheating is easily resisted—but five pounds of *value* in anything wherewith he has to deal—in stone, or metal, or lime; in human labour of all kinds; in any of the countless materials needed for the prosecution of his business or the improvement of his estate. Even already, though still living at Milend, he knows incomparably more about the Wenderholme property than John Stanburne ever knew, or any of John Stanburne's ancestors before him. He knows the precise condition of every field, or part of a field, and what is to be done to it. Even in such a matter as gardening, the gardener finds him uncheatable, though how he acquired that knowledge is a mystery, for you can hardly call that a "garden" at Milend.

It follows, from all these valuable qualifications of Mr Jacob Ogden, that he was likely to be an excellent mentor for such a youth as his nephew, destined to have to support the cares, and see his way through the perplexities, of property.

And he took him seriously in hand about this time, with the consent of the lad's father, who was well aware that without experience in affairs his boy's education could not (in any but the narrow sense of the word, as it is used by pedagogues) be considered to be complete.

Young Jacob had to get up regularly at five in the morning and accompany his uncle to the mill, where he saw the hands enter. After this, his time was divided between the counting-house and overlooking; but his duty at the mill was very frequently broken by orders from his uncle to go and inspect the improvements which were in progress on his various estates, especially, at this particular time, the road from Shayton to Wenderholme. The youth made these journeys on horseback, and being uncommonly well mounted, accomplished them more rapidly than his uncle Jacob, with all his shrewdness, ever calculated upon. In this way the inspection of the new road permitted very frequent visits to Wenderholme Cottage, where, for the present, Miss Edith resided with her grandmother.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The state of affairs between Edith and young Jacob was this: they were engaged by a mutual promise, and they were both aware that the Colonel and Mr Isaac Ogden, and also Mrs Stanburne, were favourable to their wishes; but at the same time they knew how inflexible would be the opposition at Milend, and how unlikely it was, even in the present altered circumstances of the Stanburnes, that Lady Helena would be satisfied with a decidedly plebeian alliance for her daughter. The Colonel, it is true, had given a decided consent, but it had been accompanied with the restriction that they should wait six months longer. They had already waited long enough, in their opinion; but the misfortune of their situation had been, that although many circumstances had been decidedly favourable to them, it had not been possible to unite all the favourable circumstances

together at the same time, so as to get the marriage accomplished. In the days of Colonel Stanburne's splendour and prosperity, the Milend influence had been most favourable, but Lady Helena had warned Edith in such a decided way against allowing herself to form a plebeian attachment, the allusion to young Jacob being (as it was intended to be) as intelligible as if she had named him, that it had been considered prudent by both the lovers to refrain from compromising the future by precipitation, and they had waited in the hope that, by the pressure of constantly-increasing riches, her ladyship's opposition might finally be made to give way. If Colonel Stanburne had continued prosperous, the Milend influence was so strongly, even eagerly, in favour of the alliance, that it would have subsidised its candidate very largely; and as its power of subsidising increased every day, it was evident that, by simply waiting, his prospects would steadily improve. But the Colonel's ruin, utter and hopeless as it was, had set the Milend influence on the other side; and nobody who knew the obstinacy of Jacob Ogden in opposition, and the relentless lengths to which he would go to get himself obeyed, or to inflict punishment on those who had opposed him, could doubt that, if his nephew refused compli-

ance in this instance, it would be equivalent to a total renunciation of his prospects. The hope that Mrs Stanburne had begun to entertain, that by a marriage with young Jacob her granddaughter would one day still be mistress of Wenderholme, was the illusion of an old woman. She might come to be mistress of Twistle Farm, but not of lordly Wenderholme.

Edith Stanburne had inherited much of her mother's perspicacity, with the Colonel's frank and genial manner. Some people, Mrs Prigley amongst the number, disapproved of Edith's manner, and considered her a "bold girl," because she looked people straight in the face, and had not yet learned the necessity for dissimulating her sentiments. But what experienced man of the world would not give half his subtlety for that boldness which comes from the perfect harmony of our nature with its surroundings? Why, that is simply a definition of happiness itself! When we have learned to be careful, it is because we have perceived that between our real selves and the world around us there is so little harmony that they would clash continually, so we invent a false artificial self that may be in harmony with the world, and make it live our outward life for us, talk for us in drawing-rooms and at the dinner-

table, and go through the weary round of public pleasures and observances. It is not in the nature of things that this false self, knowing itself to be false, should be bold and joyous; it has always a certain timidity, which passes for modesty in the world. But if the true self might speak and act, *it* would be bold, *it* would be joyous, being free from the cares of dissimulation. You find this boldness sometimes in grown men, but only when no representative of the conventional world is present, and only in men capable of freely playing in the high atmosphere of thought, as birds play in the air. Yet there is an equal boldness, an equal freedom, in the innocence of some bright girl who has not yet known the necessity either for telling lies or acting them, and there is a difference between her boldness and the boldness of immodesty.

It is the worst possible sign of approaching unhappiness when this courage begins to give way, and this hour had come for Edith. Young Jacob, relying upon the speed of his horse, had, on one or two occasions, prolonged his visits to Wenderholme Cottage long enough to excite his uncle's suspicions. Jacob Ogden inquired whether Miss Stanburne was with her mother at Lord Adisham's, or with her grandmother at Wenderholme. The

young man said he "believed" she was with her grandmother.

"Oh, you 'believe,' do you, young un? Cannot you tell me for certain?"

Young Jacob was no match for his keen-eyed relations at Milend, who saw through the whole matter in a minute.

"That horse o' yours is a fast un, little Jacob, but it isn't quite sharp enough to make up for three hours' courtin' at Wendrum."

The next day young Jacob was sent to look over works in a totally opposite direction; and as he had a good many measurements to take, there was no chance of getting any time to himself. Twenty-four hours later Miss Stanburne received the following letter:—

"MADAM,—I have discovered that my nephew has been idling his time away at Wenderholme Cottage. You may, perhaps, know how he was occupied. Excuse me if I say that, if my nephew idles his time away at Wenderholme Cottage, *he will never be a rich man.*—Yours truly,

"JACOB OGDEN."

The note was very intelligible, and the consequence of it was, that Edith resolved to sacrifice

herself. "I love him too much," she said, "to ruin him."

The reader may remember one Jerry Smethurst whom Isaac Ogden met at Whittlecup when on duty in the militia, and with whom he got drunk for the last time. It is twelve years since then, a long interval in any place, but an especially long interval in Shayton, where *delirium tremens* carries off the mature males with a rapidity elsewhere unknown. There had been hundreds of deaths from drinking in that township since 1853; and of all the jolly companions who used to meet at the Red Lion, the only one remaining was the proprietor of Twistle Farm. James Hardcastle, the innkeeper, was dead; Seth Schofield was in Shayton churchyard, and so was Jerry Smethurst. A new generation was drinking itself to death in that parlour, served by another landlord.

Most of these worthies had ruined themselves in fortune as in health. Men cannot spend their time in public-houses without their business feeling the effects of it; and they cannot fuddle their intellects with beer and brandy and preserve their clearness for arithmetic. So, as the prosperity of a society is the prosperity of the individuals composing it, Shayton was not a very prosperous locality, and, in comparison with

Sootythorn, lagged woefully behindhand in the race. A few men, however, managed somehow to reconcile business and the brandy-bottle, and the most successful conciliator of pleasure and affairs had been the notable Jerry Smethurst. He managed it by never drinking anything before the mill was closed; drink, to him, was the reward of the labours of the day, and not their accompaniment. His constitution had been strong enough to resist this double strain of laborious days and convivial evenings for a much longer time than Dr Bardly ever expected; and when the end came, which it did by a single attack of *delirium tremens*, succeeded by a fit of apoplexy (the patient had always apprehended apoplexy), Mr Smethurst's affairs were found to be in admirable order, and his only daughter, then a fine girl of fourteen, became heiress to an extensive mill and a quantity of building land, as well as many shops and tenements in the interior of the town which would infallibly increase in value. In a word, Sarah Smethurst was worth forty thousand now, and would be worth a hundred thousand in twenty years; so that, as the charms of her youth faded, the man fortunate enough to win her might count upon a progressive compensation in the increase of her estate.

Jacob Ogden, senior, was very accurately acquainted with Miss Smethurst's property, and could calculate its future value to a nicety. He had the best opportunities for knowing these matters, being one of Jerry Smethurst's trustees. When Colonel Stanburne was a rich man, Jacob Ogden would have preferred Miss Stanburne for his nephew to any girl in Sally Smethurst's position; for though nobody could love and appreciate money more than Jacob did, he wished to see his nephew take a higher place in society than money of itself would be able to procure for him. As in mixing a glass of grog the time comes when we want no more spirit, but turn our attention to the sugar-basin, although there can be no doubt that the spirit is the main thing (since without it the glass would be nothing but *eau sucrée*), so, when we want to make that composite of perfections, a gentleman, there is a time when money is no longer needed, though that is the main element of his strength, and we turn our attention to the sugar-basin of the *comme il faut.* When Jacob Ogden, senior, was favourable to the Wenderholme match, it was not so much on account of Miss Stanburne's money as on account of her decided position as a young lady of the aristocracy; and when the Colonel was ruined, he did

not disapprove of the match because Miss Stanburne would have no fortune, but because her position as member of a county family had been upset by her father's bankruptcy. His ambition had been that his nephew should form part of the aristocratic circle at Wenderholme, and now that this circle was broken up, he saw no use in the marriage.

Well, if the lad could not marry like a gentleman, he should marry like a prince among cotton-spinners, and contract alliance with a princess of his own order. Sally Smethurst was such a princess. Therefore it was decided that young Jacob should espouse Sally Smethurst.

And a very nice lass she was, too—a nice fat lass, with cheeks like a milkmaid, that anybody might have been glad to kiss. Mrs Ogden invited her to stop at Milend, and young Jacob saw her every day. But the effect of this acquaintance was precisely contrary to uncle Jacob's plans and intentions. Young Jacob liked Sally very well, but as for marrying her, he would as soon have thought of marrying his old friend Susy Tattersall, who was still fatter and still redder, and loved him in a maternal manner. Sally had never been out of Shayton in her life, except to a school at Lytham, and she had not a word to say.

Neither was her deportment graceful. A good lass enough, and well to do, but not the woman with whom an intelligent man would be anxious to pass his existence.

The image of Miss Stanburne, already somewhat idealised by absence, was elevated to the divine by this contrast. There is no surer way of making a noble youth worship some noble maiden, than by presenting to him a virgin typical of the commonplace, and ordering him to marry her. Edith became henceforth the object of young Jacob's ardent and chivalrous adoration. Two fortunes—his uncle's and Sally Smethurst's—making in the aggregate a prodigious heap of money, were offered to him as the reward of infidelity, and the higher the bribe rose, the higher rose his spirit of resistance.

Sally had come to Milend on a Wednesday. She was to stay Sunday over, and go to Shayton Church with the Ogdens. On Saturday night, at tea-time, young Jacob declared his intention of going to Twistle Farm.

"Why, and willn't ye stop Sunday with us and Miss Smethurst, and go to Shayton Church?"

"I haven't seen my father for a fortnight."

"Then, all that I've got to say," observed Mrs Ogden, "is, that it's your father's own wickedness

that's the cause of it. If he came regularly to church, as he ought to do, you'd be sure to see him to-morrow, and every Sunday as well, and you'd have no need to go up to Twistle Farm. I could like to drag him to Shayton Church by the hair of his head, that I could!" Here Mrs Ogden paused and sipped her tea—then she resumed,—

"I declare I *will not have* you goin' up to Twistle Farm and missin' church in that way. It's awful to think of! You miss church many a Sunday to go and stop with your father, who should know better, and set you a better example."

To do young Jacob justice, he had no intention of missing church the next morning, for he intended to hear the Rev. Mr Prigley, Vicar of Wenderholme, and sit in Mrs Stanburne's pew.

His uncle suspected this very strongly, and said, "It's my opinion, mother, 'at this lad doesn't mean to miss church to-morn. He'll be at Wendrum Church wi' that there lass. And if he is, it'll cost him dear, an' 'er too."

This menace stirred the youth's blood. He became rather red in the face. "I'm of age," he said, "and not responsible for my movements to you or anybody else." The Milend slavery galled him; the fat lass opposite became hateful to his

sight. His heart beat high with youthful love and courage.

"My arm is long, young man," said old Jacob, "and I give you fair warnin'. If you go to Wendrum to-morn, it'll be worse for you, and it'll be worse for 'er. You think I cannot touch 'er, but I can."

The lad drank his scalding tea, and rose from the table. He was not a boor, however; and, offering his hand to Miss Smethurst, he said, very courteously, "I am sorry, Miss Smethurst, not to have the pleasure of going to church with you to-morrow; it looks rude of me, but many things trouble me just now, and I must talk them over, both with my father and somebody else." And with that, and a simple good-night to the elder people, he left the room.

The owner of Twistle Farm had become a great recluse since he gave up drinking, except during his weeks of active duty in the militia, and occasional visits to his brother officers. In fact, a Shayton man, not in business, must either be a drunkard or a recluse; and Ogden, by his own experience, had learned to prefer the latter. Young Jacob, however, had a friend in Shayton who did not lead quite such a retired life, and whose opinion on the present crisis it might be

worth while to ask for. Need I say that this friend was the worthy doctor, Mr Bardly?

So, when the young gentleman rode through the town on his way to Twistle Farm, he turned into the Doctor's yard.

The twelve years that have passed since we saw the Doctor have rather aged him, but they have certainly deducted nothing from the vigour of his mind. He received his young friend with his old heartiness of manner, and made him promise to stop supper with him. "You'll ride up to Twistle Farm after supper; your father willn't be gone to bed—he sits up reading till one o'clock in the morning. I wish he wouldn't. I'm sure he's injuring his eyes."

Young Jacob laid the perplexities of his case before his experienced friend. The Doctor heard him for nearly an hour with scarcely a word of comment. Then he began:—

"I'll tell you what it is, little Jacob; you're not independent, because you haven't got a profession, don't you see? You've had a fine education, but it's worth nothing to live by, unless you turn schoolmaster; and in England, education is altogether in the hands o' them parsons. Your father isn't rich enough to keep a fine gentleman like you, never talk o' keepin' a fine wife. That's

how it is as you're dependent on them at Milend, and they know it well enough. You'll always be same as a childt for your uncle and your grandmother, and you'll 'ave to do just as they bid you. As long as your uncle lives you'll be a minor. I know him well enough. He governs everybody he can lay his hands on, and your grandmother's exactly one o' th' same sort; she's a governin' woman, is your grandmother — a governin' woman. There's a certain proportion of women as is made to rule folk, and she's one on 'em."

"Well, but, Doctor, what would you advise me to do?"

"I'm comin' to that, lad. There's two courses before you, and you mun choose one on 'em, and follow it out. You mun either just make up your mind to submit to them at Milend——"

"And desert Edith?"

"Yes, to be sure, and wed Sally Smethurst beside, and be manager of Ogden's mills, and collect his cottage-rents, and dun poor folk, and be cowed for thirty years by your uncle, and have to render 'count to him of every hour of every day—for he'll live thirty years, will your uncle; or else you mun learn a profession, and be independent on him, and wed Miss Stanburne, and

make your own way in the world. Your father'll share his income with you to-morrow; and if you weren't too proud to accept a bit o' help from an old friend, I should be very glad to do something myself, lad. I've more brass nor I want. You might marry Miss Stanburne in a month, and set to work in earnest at some profession. I don't much care what it is, provided it isn't parsoning."

Young Jacob's eyes sparkled, and his heart beat. How much better, how much nobler, it would be to win his own independence, than to hang upon his uncle all his life for the prospect of his wealth! And then to live for Edith, and with Edith!

But there was one objection which seemed all but insurmountable. Who had paid for the youth's costly education, and his large expenses (not always strictly for education) during his residence at Oxford? All these had been paid for by his uncle Jacob; and as it was repugnant to the lad's feeling of honour to desert Edith because she had fallen lower in the world, so it was repugnant to his feeling of honour to turn his life into a channel different from that which his uncle had, in his kindness and generosity, devised for it. The Doctor appreciated the gravity of this objec-

tion, yet did not consider that the sums advanced by Jacob Ogden gave him a right to forbid his nephew's marriage with Miss Stanburne, or to become absolute master of his existence. Besides, if it came to that, it was merely a money obligation after all, and money could be repaid.

"But *what* profession, Doctor? It takes a long time to learn a profession. Attorneys are articled for five years."

"How would it be if you were to be a doctor —Shayton doctor? It's worth £500 a-year to me; and you might increase it, being young and active. It's time for me to take a bit o' rest. Come and learn the profession with me. I'll allow you £250 a-year to start with, if you get wed to Miss Stanburne; your father will do as much—that'll be £500; and you may live on that, if you live quietly. And then when there's chilther there'll be more brass."

Young Jacob's eyes moistened. "I'd take help from you, sir, sooner than from anybody else, but I cannot accept half your income."

"Half my income, young man! Do you know who you are speaking to? You're speaking to one of the Shayton capitalists, sir. You recollect old Mrs Pickering? You've 'appen 'eard that she's dead, but you don't know who she's left her

money to. Very few knows that, for the will was only read to-day. Well, she's left her money to Abel Bardly, and Abel Bardly is worth seven hundred a-year without his profession!"

In the manufacturing districts seven hundred a-year is such a modest income, that a man may boast of it in a humorous manner without incurring any suspicion of being really purse-proud. The men who *are* purse-proud never tell the amount of their incomes, but speak habitually of as many of their investments as possible, in order to convey to the mind of the hearer a general impression of the illimitable.

Young Jacob laughed as he congratulated the Doctor. "I didn't know, sir, that you were such a great capitalist. But there was always a belief that Nanny Pickering — esteemed you very much."

"She was a good woman, was Mrs Pickering," the Doctor replied, gravely. And from that time forth it became understood in Shayton that the deceased lady was not to be spoken of otherwise than with gravity and respect. The Doctor was her residuary legatee, but she bequeathed various considerable sums to the charities of the place.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Such was young Jacob's piety, that rather than remain all the Sunday at Twistle Farm with that heterodox father of his, he rode over to Wenderholme in order to attend divine service there.

He got to church in very good time; and when he took his seat in Mrs Stanburne's pew, the ladies had not yet arrived. Indeed, even the Prigleys had not taken their places, so that young Jacob had something to interest him in watching the gradual arrival of the members of the congregation.

The reader may remember that Mrs Stanburne had a small pew of her own appertaining to the Cottage, whereas there was a large pew appertaining to the Hall. Mrs Stanburne still remained faithful to her little pew, and the great comfortable enclosure (a sort of drawing-room without ceiling, and with walls only four feet high) had

been empty since the departure of the Colonel and Lady Helena.

The congregation gradually constituted itself; the Prigleys soon filled the pew belonging to the vicarage; the principal farmers on the Wenderholme estate penned themselves like sheep (Mr Prigley's sheep) in their narrow wooden partitions; and lastly came Mrs Stanburne and Edith. When people meet in a pew at church, their greetings are considerably abridged; and if Edith's face was more than usually sad, her lover might, if he liked, attribute the expression to religious seriousness.

Young Jacob kneeled whilst Mr Prigley read the general confession, and when he got up again his eyes wandered over the pews before him, before they settled again upon his prayer-book.

He gave a start of astonishment. In the great Wenderholme pew, quietly in one corner of it, sat the present owner of the estate!

Young Jacob's heart beat. He knew that the plot was thickening, and that a great struggle was at hand. But he was in a better position to meet his uncle to-day than he had been yesterday. Yesterday he had been undecided, and though inwardly rebellious, had had no plans; to-day he was resolved, and *had* plans. The con-

versation with the Doctor had been succeeded by another conversation with his father, and the consequence was that young Jacob was resolved that, rather than give up Edith, he would go to the length of a rupture with the authorities at Milend. He would live no longer under their power; he would go to the Doctor's and learn the profession. Isaac Ogden was rather better off than he had been. Some portions of his property had increased in value, and he had been saving for the last ten years. Instead of five hundred a-year he had now nearly eight hundred, and he had acquired, in his seclusion, habits of economy which were equivalent to a still further increase of income. Supported by two bachelors so well to do as his father and the Doctor, and so little addicted to extravagance of any kind, young Jacob's position, even without his Crœsus of an uncle, was still rather a strong one; and the certainty of a good practice as a surgeon, which would fall into his hands as soon as he passed his examinations, was a good thing to have to look forward to. He felt that he might fairly expect to keep even such a wife as Edith Stanburne; for though she had been bred to higher expectations, she was a sensible young woman, and would know how to accommodate herself to her new sphere.

Mr Prigley preached one of his best sermons that day, but neither of the two Jacob Ogdens paid very much attention to it, I am afraid. They were polishing their weapons for the combat. Each was taking the gravest resolutions, each was resolving upon the sacrifice of long-cherished hopes; for, notwithstanding the hardness of the manufacturer's nature, he had still rather tender feelings about "little Jacob," as he still habitually called him, and it was painful to think that a youth in all respects so perfectly the gentleman should not succeed to a splendid position for which he had been expressly and elaborately prepared. On the other hand, the manufacturer could not endure that anybody should thwart his will and not be sufficiently punished for it; and if little Jacob persisted in marrying in opposition to the authorities at Milend, the only punishment adequate to an offence so heinous was the extreme one of disinheritance.

Both the hostile parties were made aware that the service was at an end by the general movement of the congregation. Jacob Ogden left his pew before anybody else, and walked straight to that of Mrs Stanburne. He bowed slightly to the ladies, and beckoned to young Jacob, who came to the pew-door. Then he whispered in his ear,—

"Come and have your dinner with me at Wendrum 'All."

"I cannot, uncle. I've promised to lunch at the Cottage."

"You'd better have your dinner with me. If you stop at the Cottage, it'll be worse for you and it'll be worse for 'er."

"Do what you like, sir; my mind is made up."

"Very well; you'll rue it."

And the owner of Wenderholme walked alone across the park, and dined alone in the great dining-room. During dinner (an extravagance very rare at all times with him, and in solitude unprecedented), he ordered a bottle of champagne.

Meanwhile young Jacob lunched with the two ladies at the Cottage. Mrs Stanburne saw that there was something wrong, some cause of trouble and anxiety, so she did her best to remove the burden which seemed to oppress the minds of the young people. Old Mrs Stanburne had great powers of conversation, and *made* young Jacob talk. She made him talk about Oxford, and then she made him talk about his present occupations, and of the transition from one to the other. Finally she asked him how he liked the life of a cotton-manufacturer.

"Not much, Mrs Stanburne. But it signifies

very little whether I liked it or not, for I have left it."

"Left it! Well, but is not that very imprudent? When gentlemen have a great deal of property in factories, they ought to know all about it, and I have always heard that the only way to do that is to pass a year or two in the trade."

"Very true. But then I shall never have any property in factories, so there is no occasion for me to learn the trade."

Mrs Stanburne was much astonished, but her good-breeding struggled against curiosity. Edith did not seem to be paying any attention to what was going forward; she looked out of the window, and it was evident that she was mentally absent.

"Edith," Mrs Stanburne said at last, "do you hear what Jacob says? He says he has left business. I think it is very imprudent; and when I say so, he tells me that he will never have any factories."

Edith lent the most languid attention to her grandmother's piece of information. Her whole conduct was just the reverse of her usual way of behaving. Formerly she had taken the liveliest interest in everything that concerned her lover,

but to-day this had been succeeded by perfect apathy.

"Really," said Mrs Stanburne, "you two young people seem to be very mysterious to-day. I think I shall leave you to yourselves. Do you know that you are not at all good company? Little Jacob used to be good company, but he isn't now. I declare he is as dull as if he had lived in his cotton-mill all his life."

The fact is, young Jacob's position was very embarrassing, especially to a young man like him. Had he been ten years older, he would have known how to tell his news gracefully, so as not to make a hero of himself on the one hand, nor a fool on the other. But, being young, he felt it extremely difficult to tell a young lady that he had just sacrificed all his prospects for her sake, and to ask her in the next breath to be the wife of a country surgeon of moderate means, when she had believed herself engaged to one of the richest heirs in those parts. However, it came out at last, in a blundering sort of way.

"My uncle has disinherited me. I am going to be a doctor. I am going to learn the profession with Mr Bardly in Shayton."

Mrs Stanburne was more surprised by this news than Edith was. "But *why?*" she asked,

emphatically; "*why* has he disinherited you? I thought you were on the best possible terms. He spoke to you to-day as he was going out of church."

Young Jacob was silent for a minute. Mrs Stanburne came back to the charge. "But *why*, I say—*why?*"

Then the lad became confused, being hard pressed, and could not tell a neat lie, or put the truth in a prettier shape. "It's on account of Edith," he said. "My uncle wants me to marry a girl of his own choosing, called Sally Smethurst."

"My dear Jacob," Mrs Stanburne said, decidedly, "we like you very much—we have always liked you very much, and you have always behaved honourably, and as a gentleman. But I am sure that Edith would not sacrifice your prospects. Your engagement must be broken off. We are poor people now, Mr Ogden, but we do not desire to enter any family in that way. Everything forbids it; our esteem for yourself forbids it, and our pride forbids it. I am sure Edith agrees with me."

Miss Stanburne indicated her assent by an inclination of the head. She was very pale, but her face expressed an unshakable firmness. However, she rose and left the room.

"Let me speak to Edith herself. I have not had time to explain it all rightly." And Jacob left the room. Miss Stanburne was going up the staircase to her bedroom, and was already on the landing.

"Come down to me, Edith, come down to me! I have so many things to say to you. Come!"

She hesitated a little; then she turned and descended the stairs quietly, and led the way into the drawing-room, where they would be alone.

"Dearest Edith," he began, "it is too late to draw back in that way. Everything is settled. All the difficulties are over. We can do without my uncle well enough. My father approves, and so does our dear good friend Bardly. We shall be very well off—we shall be able to live very decently, and I am sure you don't care for much more."

Now, what was going on in Edith's mind just then may be best expressed by the following little soliloquy.

"Poor dear Jacob, how I do love him! What a paradise it would be, that simple quiet life with him—at Shayton, anywhere in the world. But I love him too much to ruin him, so I must be hard now." And then she acted her part, and overdid it.

Looking at him coldly, she said: "Mr Ogden, I may sink a good deal in your esteem by what I am going to say to you. You seem to be a lover of the romantic kind, and to hold the 'love-in-a-cottage' theory. I confess I don't see the attraction of being a surgeon's wife in Shayton."

Young Jacob was astounded. This from Edith! The very last thing he had ever anticipated was an objection of the selfish kind from her. He had counted upon all obstacles but this; and all other obstacles were surmountable, but this was insurmountable. He saw at once that it would be madness to marry a young lady who despised his life, and the labours which he went through for her sake.

If he could only have known! She, poor thing, was new in this game of cruelty with a kind intention, and she played it with even more than necessary hardness. Perhaps she felt that without this overstrung hardness she could not deceive him at all; that the least approach to tenderness would be fatal to her purpose. She had imagination enough to conceive and act a part utterly foreign to her character, but not imagination enough to act a part only just sufficiently foreign to herself to serve her immediate

end. So there was a harsh excess in what she did.

"Edith," he said at last, "what you have said gives me great pain. I had no idea that you cared so much for money."

The poor girl writhed inwardly, but she maintained a serene countenance, and, looking young Jacob full in the face, said, with a well-imitated sneer,—

"I may say with truth that it has latterly been agreeable to me to think that the daughter of Colonel Stanburne would one day live at Wenderholme. I am not purely and simply a piece of worldliness; for instance, I would rather have you with £10,000 a-year than anybody else with half as much again. But I confess I have not the sort of heroism which would consent to be a surgeon's wife in such a place as Shayton. I would rather remain an old maid."

"If these are your reasons, Miss Stanburne, I have done. A man would be a fool to sacrifice his prospects, and slave at a profession all his life, for a woman who paid him with contempt. And I think I may say that you dismiss me with uncommon coolness. I've loved you these twelve years—I've loved you ever since I was a child. I never loved any other woman; and the reward

of this devotion is, that I am sent away when my prospects are clouded, without a sign of emotion or a syllable to express regret. I think you might say you are sorry, at any rate."

"Very well, I will say that. I am sorry."

By a supreme effort of acting, Edith put an expression into her face which conveyed the idea that she considered emotion ridiculous, and young Jacob's own conduct as verging slightly upon the absurd. This stung him to the quick.

"Upon my word, Edith, you are perfectly exasperating. You have nothing for me to-day but sneers."

"Have I said anything to offend you? I have been frank with you, that is all."

"But it's your *manner*, Edith. I never saw you with such a manner as you have to-day."

"Really? I was not aware of it. I am much obliged to you for telling me that my manner is not to your taste. However, this is of the less consequence that it is probable we shall not see much of each other after to-day."

Her wonderful acting completely deceived her lover. "What a heartless creature she is!" he thought to himself. "After all, I'm very well out of it."

"Miss Stanburne," he said, after a pause, "this

conversation is leading to no good. It is useless to prolong it."

"I quite agree with you"

"Well, then, good-bye. I hope you'll marry a rich man."

"Thanks for you good wishes."

And he was gone.

If he could have seen what passed after his departure, he would have gone back to Shayton in a very different frame of mind. Edith had acted her part and held out bravely to the last, but when Jacob was once fairly out of the house, the faithful heart could endure its self-inflicted torture no longer, and she ran up-stairs to her bedroom and locked the door, and burst into bitter tears. "How good and brave he is, and how he loves me! It is hard, it is *very* hard, to have to throw away a heart like his. But I will not be his ruin—I never will be his ruin!" Then a thousand tender recollections came into her memory—recollections of the long years of his faithful love and service. It had begun in their childhood, when first she called him "Charley," giving him one of her own names; it had continued year after year until this very day, when he would have sacrificed all for her, and she had treated him with coldness and cruelty—*she* who so loved him! And to think

that he would *never know the truth*—that the long dreary future would wear itself gradually out until both of them were in their graves, and that he would never know how her heart yearned to him, and remained faithful to him always! That thought was the hardest and bitterest of them all, *that he would never know;* that all his life he would retain that misconception about her which she herself had so carefully created! It is easy to bear the bad opinion of people we care nothing about, but when those we most love disapprove, how eagerly we desire their absolution!

Edith was not quite so strong as she herself believed. The late events had tried her courage to the utmost, and outwardly she seemed to have borne them well; but they had strained her nervous system a good deal, and this last trial of her fortitude had been too much, even for her. Her agony rapidly passed from mental grief into an uncontrollable crisis of the nerves. She went through this alone, lying upon her bed, sobbing and moaning, her face on the pillow, her hands convulsively agitated. Then came utter vacancy, and after the vacancy a slow, painful awakening to the new sadness of her life.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

When young Jacob quitted the Cottage, he rode on horseback towards the Hall, and in doing so met his uncle. It would have been impossible to avoid him if he had wished it, but after what had just passed between him and Edith, he was aware that the feud between them might be considered virtually at an end.

Jacob Ogden, senior, was walking down the road towards Wenderholme Cottage. He made a sign to his nephew to stop his horse, and said, "Where are you goin'?"

"I was going back to Twistle Farm."

"Well, then, just you stop a bit at Wendrum 'All first, will you? I've something to say to you, and then we can ride back to Shayton together."

"I shall be very glad, uncle."

Jacob, senior, pursued his way to the Cottage,

and inquired if Mrs Stanburne were in. He was shown into a little morning-room, where the old lady was sitting by herself.

She received him politely, but rather distantly, and began to talk about general subjects—about the church, and Mr Prigley, and the new road from Shayton to Wenderholme.

"It's partly that new road as is the cause of what I've comed here about to-day," said the lord of the soil, looking dangerous. Mrs Stanburne said nothing, but seemed to pay increased attention.

"I've comed to say that this isn't to go on. You know well enough what I mean, Mrs Stanburne. I mean, you and that young woman aren't to have my nevvy; so it's no good settin' your caps at him. He isn't for bankrupts' dorthers."

Mrs Stanburne did not condescend to answer. She simply looked at the figure before her, clothed with power and bad Shayton tailoring, and wondered what would come next.

"You think you'll get back into Wendrum 'All by that road; but you willn't do. It willn't answer, willn't that scheme. You may get to Twistle Farm, but not to Wendrum 'All. My brother Isaac's worth 'appen five hundred a-year."

Still not a word of answer. The silence began to be alarming. The bottle of champagne gave courage to the lord of Wenderholme in his valorous combat with an old lady of seventy-two.

"But so as to make things quite sure," said the gentleman, "I've made up my mind as you aren't to stop here any longer. I've come to tell you as you're to quit this 'ere 'ouse. You aren't a tenant. I've drawn no rent from you, and there's been no agreement made about rent. I said you might stop durin' my good plezur, and we'd talk about rent at afther. You aren't a tenant, and there's no notice wanted; so you mun flit out o' this to-morn."

A summary eviction!

Mrs Stanburne still said nothing. Her silence became irritating to him who owned the walls that sheltered them both, and the window that gave them light, and all the land that could be seen through the window.

"Do you yer?"

"I hear," said Mrs Stanburne. And she remained quietly seated whilst her visitor rose and departed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The lord of Wenderholme was not *quite* satisfied with himself as he returned towards the great mansion; still, he considered that he had made his authority felt—that his long arm had struck the threatened blow.

He found his nephew in the dining-room at Wenderholme Hall. He expected a combat there, in which the opposite party would not be quite so submissively or disdainfully silent as in that other combat (if indeed it could be called a combat) from which he had just triumphantly emerged. The "young un" would probably show fight.

But, to Mr Ogden's astonishment, the "young un" gave in immediately. "It's all over between me and Miss Stanburne, sir. You will be glad of it. I cannot say I am glad of it. However, whether I am glad or not, it's all over."

"Well, lad, this is a rare good 'earin'.* It's the best thing as has 'appened to thee, lad, for many a bit."

And then he broke forth into a great eulogy of wealth! "What's Colonel Stanburne now? What is he, and where is he, and who is he? Nobody knows where he is, and nobody cares; but twelve month sin', if he'd gone from this place to his 'ouse in London, it was in all the newspapers that 'Colonel and Lady Helena Stanburne had arrived in Grosvenor Square from Wenderholme Hall, Yorkshire.' Who cares where he arrives now? When he had brass he were somebody; now that he's no brass, he is nobody. And it'll be just the same for thee, young un, and for all on us. So long as a man has brass he goes, and he comes, and he does just as he likes, and all that he does is right. But when a man has no brass, he finds it different. John Stanburne finds it different, I'll warrant him. Who's the great man to-day? It's Jacob Ogden, senior. I've been put on the commission of the peace, young un! I'm Jacob Ogden of Wendrum 'All, J.P. It's Ogden of Wendrum, J.P."

Then he paused a little, and said, "Young un, let's go and look about us a bit;" but as they

* A good hearing, equivalent to good news.

crossed the great hall, he stopped and lifted up his eyes.

"See you all them coats of arms? What's all them coats of arms worth for John Stanburne now? He were a fool, were John Stanburne—a suckin' hinfant, and a fool. If I'd had his cards, I'd 'ave been a Right Honourable, and I'd have had more land than ever he had in his best days. And there's his pedigree—it's the Stanburne pedigree all along that there cornish. What do I care for his pedigree? I'll have it all chiselled away some day, and them panels painted white. And I'll have that ceiling underdrawn, and white glass put in them windows. It was 'long o' this rubbish as he went into that Sootythorn Bank. But you'll be a bigger man, young un" (slapping him on the back till the echoes of the hall resounded), "than ever that John Stanburne were. You'll have five times more brass than ever he had, 'appen ten times more. You'll go into Parliament, and then it willn't be Ogden of Wendrum, J.P., but it'll be Ogden o' Wendrum, Hem P.!"

He had got into a vein so friendly and communicative, that he told his inmost thoughts to the youth whom he proudly looked upon as his heir.

"There's to be a great blow-out 'ere in about a fortnit, upo' 'count o' th' opening of our new road. There's to be a procession from Shayton for openin' it. I wouldn't give a blow-out just for havin' bought this 'ere place, but for openin' a new road it's different. I'm makin' a present o' that road to Shayton township, and there'll be toll-bars for keepin' it in repair. It runs ten mile on my own land. It isn't everybody as can run ten mile on his own land, and a mile or two farther beside."

Then he went on glorifying himself and his riches and his success—singing, as it were, his song of triumph in the house on which John Stanburne had lavished his lost gold. Poor John Stanburne! to think that you prepared your house so splendidly to receive Jacob Ogden of Milend!

CHAPTER XXX.

At length the great day arrived, towards the end of October, when the new road from Shayton to Wenderholme was to be solemnly inaugurated.

Mr Jacob Ogden had made all his arrangements with that administrative ability which distinguished him. He had gone into every detail just as closely as if the work of this great day had been the earning of money instead of its expenditure. The main features of the programme were: 1. A procession from Shayton to Wenderholme by the new route. 2. A grand dinner at Wenderholme. 3. A ball.

The procession was to leave Shayton at noon precisely; and about half-past eleven, a magnificent new carriage, ornamented with massive silver, and drawn by two superb grey horses, whose new harness glittered in the sunshine,

rolled up to Mrs Ogden's door. On the box sat a fine coachman in livery, and a footman jumped down from behind to knock at the Milend front door.

Just at the same moment Mr Jacob Ogden walked quietly up the drive, and when the door opened he walked in. The splendid servants respectfully saluted him.

The carriage, as we have said, had an appearance of great newness and brilliance, but there was something which gave it a decidedly exceptional and festive air, and that something was a fluttering of ribbons. The horses had silk rosettes with ribbons dangling and flying, and the men wore ribbons on their hats.

The Shayton tailor had surpassed himself for this occasion, and Mr Jacob looked so well dressed that anybody would have thought his clothes had been made at Sootythorn. He wore kid gloves also.

But however well dressed a man may be, his splendour can never be comparable to a lady's, especially such a lady as Mrs Ogden, who had a fearlessness in the use of colours like that which distinguished our younger painters twenty years ago. She always managed to adorn herself so that everything about her looked bright, except

her complexion and her eyes. Behold her as the door opens! The Queen in all her glory is not so fine as the mistress of Milend! What shining splendour! what dazzling effulgence! A blind man said that he imagined scarlet to be as the sound of a trumpet; but the vision of Mrs Ogden was equal to a whole brass band.

"Why, and whose cayridge is this 'ere, Jacob?"

"Cayridge, mother? It's nobbut a two-horse fly, fro' Manchester, new painted."

The fact was, it was Mrs Ogden's own carriage, purchased by her son without her knowledge or consent; but, to avoid a scene before his new domestics, he preferred the above amiable little fiction. So Mrs Ogden stepped for the first time into her carriage without being aware that she had attained that great object of the *nouveau riche*. There was no danger that she would recognise the armorial bearings which decorated the panels and the harness. Jacob himself had not known them a month before, but he had sent "name and county" to a heraldic establishment in Lincoln's Inn Fields; and, as his letter had been duly accompanied by a post-office order, three days afterwards he had received a very neat

drawing of his coat of arms, emblazoned in azure and gold. It was cheaper than going to the College of Arms, and did just as well.

There was nobody in the new carriage except Mrs Ogden and her son. Miss Smethurst was invited, but she had a carriage and pair of her own, which she used to do honour to the occasion. Many other friends of the Ogdens (friends or business acquaintances) also came in their carriages, for the tradesmen of those parts had generally adopted the custom of carriage-keeping during the last few years. Even our friend the Doctor now kept a comfortable brougham, in which he joined the procession. Mr Isaac Ogden of Twistle Farm, and Mr Jacob Ogden, jun., his son, joined the procession on horseback, riding very fine animals indeed. A pack of harriers was kept a short distance from Shayton, and it had been agreed that all the gentlemen of the hunt who had invitations should be asked to come as equestrians.

Jacob Ogden had contrived to give a public character to his triumph by his gift of the new road to the township. The magistrates for the time being were to be the trustees of it, hence the magistrates (including one or two country

gentlemen of some standing) found themselves compelled to take part in the triumph. All men were that day compelled to acknowledge Jacob Ogden's greatness, and to do him homage.

The telegraph was already established between the mill and Wenderholme, and when the Shayton procession started on its way, the fact was known instantaneously at Wenderholme by telegram. At the same moment a counter-procession left Wenderholme on horseback to meet the one coming from Shayton. The Yorkshire procession consisted chiefly of the tenants of the Wenderholme estate on horseback, headed by the agent. Most of them were in anything but a congratulatory frame of mind, but as they dreaded the anger of their landlord, they rode forth to meet him to a man.

A holiday had been given at the mill, and all the mill hands were to accompany the Shayton procession for two miles upon the road, after which they were to return to Shayton, and there make merry at Mr Ogden's expense. Most of the hands belonged to benefit clubs such as the Odd Fellows, the Druids, the Robin Hood, and so on; and they borrowed for the occasion the banners used in the solemnities of these societies,

and their picturesque and fanciful costumes. These added immensely to the effect, and gave the procession a richness and a variety which it would otherwise have lacked.

The departure of the *cortège* had been timed at the dinner-hour, when all the mills were loosed, so that the whole Shayton population might witness it. As it moved slowly along the streets, the crowd was as dense as if Royalty itself had made a progress through the town. Mrs Ogden repeatedly recognised acquaintances in the crowd, and bowed and smiled most graciously from her carriage-window—indeed a queen could hardly have looked more radiant or more gracious. Seeing her good-humour, Jacob ventured to inform her that she was "sitting in her own carriage."

"Sitting in my own cayridge! Well, then, stop th' horses, for Is'll get out."

"Nay, nay, mother, you munnut do so—you munnut do so. You'll stop o th' procession. There's no stoppin' now. It's too latt for stoppin'."

"Well, if I'd known I'd never a coom! What is th' folk sayin', thinken ye? Why, they're o sayin', one to another, 'There's Mistress Ogden

in her new cayridge, an' who's as fain * as fain.'"

"Well, mother, and what if they do say so? What means it?"

"Draw them there blinds down."

"Nay, but I willn't. We aren't goin' to a funeral."

After a while Mrs Ogden began to look at the nice blue lining of her carriage somewhat more approvingly. At last she said, "Jacob, I'n never thanked thee. Thank ye, Jacob—thank ye. I shalln't live to use it for long, but it'll do for little Jacob wife at afther."

When Mrs Ogden had made this little speech, her son knew that the carriage difficulty was at an end, and indeed she never afterwards evinced any repugnance to entering that very handsome and comfortable vehicle.

The procession moved at a walking pace for the first two miles, on account of the people on foot. When these, however, had returned in the direction of Shayton, the speed was somewhat increased, though, as the road steadily ascended till it reached the Yorkshire border, the horses could not go very

* Fain is a combination of happy and proud. It answers very nearly to a certain sense of the French word "content."

fast. The road, too, being quite new, the macadam was rather rough, though Jacob Ogden had sent a heavy iron roller, drawn by fourteen powerful horses, from one end to the other.

The weather could not possibly have been more favourable, and it would be difficult to imagine a more cheerful and exhilarating route. There had been a slight frost during the night, and the air of the high moorland was deliciously fresh and pure. The startled grouse frequently whirred over the heads of the horsemen, and made not a few of them regret the absence of their fowling-pieces, and the present necessity for marching in military order. The view became gradually more and more extensive, till at length, on approaching the border, a splendid prospect was visible on both sides, stretching in Lancashire far beyond Shayton to the level land near Manchester—and in Yorkshire, beyond Wenderholme and Rigton to the hills near Stanithburn Peel. A landmark had been erected on the border, and as the Shayton procession approached it, the body of horsemen from Wenderholme were seen approaching it from the other side. It had been arranged that they should meet at the stone.

When both processions had stopped, the Wen-

derholme agent came and presented an address to Mrs Ogden, which he read in a loud voice, and then handed to her in the carriage. She was graciously pleased to say a few words in reply, which were not audible to the people about.

At this place a small wooden hut had been erected, from which now issued men bearing a large silver tankard of mulled ale for the gentlemen, and another of spiced wine for the ladies. The silver tankards were a long time in going their round; and when this ceremony was over, the combined procession formed itself in order of march, and began to descend the long slope towards Wenderholme.

The road entered the village, and therefore did not go quite directly to the Hall. As it had been Jacob Ogden's intention from the first to play the part of Public Benefactor in this matter, he guarded the privacy of his mansion.

At the entrance of the village there was a triumphal arch made of heather and evergreens, and decorated with festoons of coloured calico. Here the procession paused a second time, whilst the villagers came to make their little offering to Mrs Ogden.

The lord of Wenderholme was both surprised and offended by the absence of Mr Prigley. "I'll

make him pay for't," he thought, "if he wants out* doin' at his church, or any subscriptions, or the like o' that." Indeed, the absence of Mr Prigley was the more surprising that it was contrary to the traditions of his caste, usually sufficiently ready to do honour to the powers that be.

Also, Jacob Ogden thought that the church bells might have rung for him. But they didn't ring. A hostile Prigley or Stanburne influence was apparent there also. It was irritating to have the great triumph marred by this pitiful ecclesiastical opposition. "He shall rue it," said Jacob, inwardly—"he shall rue it!"

A table had been set in the middle of Wenderholme green, and on this table was a large and massive silver inkstand, and in the inkstand a gold pen with a jewelled penholder. Here Jacob Ogden descended from his carriage, and, surrounded by all the chief personages in the procession, sat down under a spreading oak, and signed the deed of gift by which the road from Shayton to Wenderholme was transferred in trust to the Shayton magistrates and their successors for ever and ever.

The inkstand bore an inscription, and was formally presented to Mr Ogden. And a great shout

* Anything.

rose—all John Stanburne's former tenants distinguishing themselves in the "hip, hip," &c.

After that the procession entered Wenderholme Park, and Mrs Ogden descended at the grand entrance, and moved across the hall, and up the tapestried staircase.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The reader is not to suppose, from the parsimony which marked the habitual life of Jacob Ogden and his mother, that when they had made up their minds to what they called a "blow-out," there would be any meanness or littleness in their proceedings. Under all circumstances they acted with clear minds, knowing what they were doing; and when they resolved to be extravagant, they *were* extravagant. The fine principle of that grand and really moral motto, "*Pecca fortiter,*" was thoroughly understood and consistently acted upon by the man who had won Wenderholme by his industry and thrift. When he sinned, there was no weak compromise with conscience—he did it manfully and boldly, and no mistake. He never "muddled away" a sovereign, but his triumph cost him many a hundred sovereigns, and he knew beforehand precisely what he was going

to spend. When it was all over he would pay the piper, and lock up his cash-box again, and return to his old careful ways.

The Ogdens did not receive many visitors at Milend, and yet they had rather an extensive acquaintance amongst people of their own class—rich people belonging to trade, and living in the great manufacturing towns. And to this festivity they had invited everybody they knew. The house of Wenderholme, large as it was, was filled with Jacob Ogden's guests, and his mother did the honours with a homely but genuine hospitality, which made everybody feel kindly disposed to her; and though they could not help laughing a little at her now and then, they did it without malice. The reader will remember that, from a sort of pride which distinguished her, she had refrained from visiting Wenderholme until the completion of the new road; and as the chariot of the Olympic victor entered his city by a breach in the wall, so Mrs Ogden's carriage came to Wenderholme by a route which no carriage had ever before traversed. It would have been better, however, in some respects, if the good lady had familiarised herself a little with the splendours of Wenderholme before she undertook to receive so many guests therein, for it was quite foreign to the

frankness of her nature to act the *nil admirari.* Thus, on entering the magnificent drawing-room, where many guests were already assembled, she behaved exactly as she had done when, during a visit to Buxton, some friends had taken her to see Chatsworth.

"Well!" she exclaimed, lifting up both her hands, "this *is* a grand room!" Nor was she contented with this simple exclamation, but she went on examining and exclaiming, and walked all round, and lifted up the curtains, and the heavy tassels of their cords, and touched the tapestry on the chairs, and, in a word, quite forgot her dignity of hostess in the novelty of the things about her.

"Those curtains must have cost thirty shillings a-yard!" she said, appealing to the judgment of the elder ladies present, "and the stuff's narrow beside."

Impressions of splendour depend very much upon contrast, so that Wenderholme seemed very astonishing to a person coming directly from Milend. But such impressions are soon obliterated by habit, and in a week Mrs Ogden will have lost the "fresh eye," to which she owes her present sense of enchantment. How long would it take to get accustomed to Blenheim, or Castle

Howard, or Compiègne? Would it take a fortnight? However, Mrs Ogden had the advantage of a far fresher eye than *nous autres*, who are so accustomed to gilding and glitter in public *cafés* and picture-galleries, that we are all, as it were, princes, insensible to impressions of splendour.

All that Mrs Ogden said upon that memorable day it would be tedious to relate. She thought aloud, and the burden of her thoughts, their ever-recurring refrain, was her sense of the grandeur that surrounded her. Jacob Ogden had bought a good deal of Colonel Stanburne's fine old silver plate, and this formed the main subject of Mrs Ogden's conversation during dinner. "I think our Jacob's gone fair mad with pride," she said to all the company, and in the hearing of the attentive servants, "for we'd plenty of silver at Milend — quite plenty for any one; we've all my uncle Adam's silver spoons, and my aunt Alice's, and plenty of silver candlesticks, and a tea-service—and I cannot tell what our Jacob would be at." Then she added, with serene complacency, "However, it's all paid for."

She had not the art of avoiding a topic likely to be disagreeable either to herself or anybody else, but would make other folks uncomfortable,

and torture her own mind by dwelling upon their sores and her own. I don't think that in this she was altogether wrong, or that the most delicate people are altogether right in doing exactly the contrary, for it is as well to grasp nettles with a certain hardihood; but she carried a respectable sort of courage to a very unnecessary excess. Thus, when she had done about the silver and the general extravagance of "our Jacob," the next topic she found to talk about was the absence of Mr and Mrs Prigley. She launched forth into a catalogue of all the benefits wherewith she had overwhelmed Mrs Prigley in the days of her poverty at Shayton, and represented that lady as a monster of ingratitude. "Why, they were so poor," Mrs Ogden said, "that they couldn't even afford carpets to their floors; but now that they're better off in the world, they turn their backs on those that helped them. We were always helping them, and making them presents." Every one saw that the Ogdens were dreadfully sore about the absence of the vicar and his wife, and it was not very good policy on Mrs Ogden's part to draw attention to it in that way; for a parson, though ornamental, is not absolutely indispensable to a good dinner, and they might have got on very well without one.

The dinner was served in the great hall at five o'clock, and few of the guests, as they sat at the feast, could help lifting their eyes to the wainscot, and the frescoes, and the great armorial ceiling—few could help thinking of the Colonel. No one present, however, was in such a conflicting and contradictory state of mind as young Jacob, nor was any one so thoroughly miserable. The whole triumph had disgusted him from beginning to end, and he was not in a humour to be either charitable or indulgent, or to see things on their amusing side. Ever since that last interview with Edith, he had been moody and misanthropical, accepting the position his uncle had made for him, but accepting it without one ray of pleasure. Such a condition of mind, if prolonged for several years, would end by making a man horribly cynical and sour, and probably drive him to take refuge in the lowest pleasures and the lowest aims. When the barque of love is wrecked, and the noble ambition of work and independence lies feeble and half dead, and we allow others to arrange all our life for us, what is the use of being young? what is the use of having health and riches, and all sorts of fine prospects and advantages?

When the banquet was over the company re-

turned to the drawing-room, and young Jacob began to think that Sally Smethurst was the nicest-looking young person there. His uncle was pleased to observe his polite attentions to the young lady, and, taking him aside, said, "That's reet, lad—that's reet; ax 'er to dance, and when you've been dancin' a good bit, ax her summat elz. You'll never have such another chance. She's quite fresh to this place, and she never saw out like Wendrum 'All; she's just been tellin' my mother what a rare fine place it is."

"Well," thought young Jacob to himself, "as I cannot have Edith, why not please my uncle and my grandmother? Sally Smethurst is a nice honest-looking young woman, and I daresay she'd make a very good sort of wife." The male nature is so constituted that, when not firmly anchored in some strong attachment, it easily drifts away on the *fleuve du tendre*, and this poor youth had been cut away from his moorings. What wonder, then, if he drifted!

Sally thought him very nice, and handsome, and kind, and she promised to dance with him most willingly. The dining-room had been prepared for dancing, and it answered the purpose all the better as there was a dais at one end of the room which afforded at once a safe retreat

and a convenient position for spectators, whilst at the other was a gallery for musicians, now occupied by an excellent band of stringed instruments from Manchester. In short, the dining-room at Wenderholme had been arranged strictly on the principle of the old baronial hall. The gallery was supported by fantastic pillars of carved oak, and decorated with gigantic antlers which had been given to Colonel Stanburne by a friend of his, a mighty hunter in South Africa.

The ball went on with great spirit till after midnight, when supper was served in the long gallery. Even Mrs Ogden, old as she was, had danced, and danced well too, to the astonishment of the spectators. The host himself had performed, and, having a good ear for music, always managed to keep time pretty well, though his proficiency as a dancer might be questioned.

What with the dancing, and the negus, and the champagne, and the splendours of the noble house, and the flattery of so many guests, and the obsequious service of so many attendants, and the sense of their own greatness and success, not only Jacob Ogden, senior, but all the Ogdens, were a little elevated that night. Young Jacob did not escape this infection—at his age, how could he?—and having taken Miss Smethurst up

the grand staircase to supper, rapidly approached that point which his uncle desired him to attain.

Amidst the noise of the talk around him, the lad went further and further. He talked about Wenderholme already almost as if it were his own, and forgot, for the time, his old friend the Colonel and his misfortunes in an exulting sense of his own highly-promising position. "He intended to live at Wenderholme a good deal," he said, and then asked Miss Smethurst whether *she* would like to live at Wenderholme.

But he did not hear her answer. A figure like a ghost, with pale, sad, resolute face, approached silently, moving from the darker end of the long gallery into the blaze of light about the supper-table.

It was Mr Prigley.

The master of the house saw him, too, and as he approached said aloud, and not very politely,—

"Better late than never, parson; come and sit down next to my mother and get your supper.

But Mr Prigley still remained standing. However, he approached the table. Still he would not sit down.

Every one looked at him, and no one who had looked once took his eyes off Mr Prigley again. There was that in his face which fixed attention

irresistibly. The roar of the conversation was suddenly hushed, and a silence succeeded in which you might have heard the breaking of a piece of bread.

Then Mr Prigley spoke—a public speech, addressed to the whole assembly.

"I have come to tell you that Mrs Stanburne, mother of Colonel Stanburne of Wenderholme, is now lying in a dying state at the vicarage. Her illness has been brought on by the suddenness with which the present owner of Wenderholme ordered her to quit her cottage on this estate. She was an old lady, in feeble health, and the trouble of a sudden eviction has proved too much for her. If there is any surgeon here, let him follow me."

This said, Mr Prigley quitted the table without bowing to anybody, and his gaunt figure and pale grave face passed along the gallery to the great staircase. Dr Bardly left his place at the supper-table, and followed him.

Miss Smethurst's young partner made no more soft speeches to her that night. A great pang smote him in his breast. Had he forgotten those dear friends who had been so good to him in the time of their prosperity? And what was this horrible story of an eviction? Mrs Stanburne

turned out of Wenderholme Cottage! Could it be possible that his uncle had gone to such a length as that?

The boy was down the staircase in an instant, and overtook the Doctor and Mr Prigley as they were crossing the great hall. They walked swiftly and silently to the vicarage.

"You'd better wait here, little Jacob," said Dr Bardly; "I'll go up-stairs." And he put Jacob into a small sitting-room, which was empty.

The lad had been there five minutes when the door opened, and Edith came in. She looked very ill and miserable.

All the old tenderness for Edith came back into Jacob's heart as he felt for her in this trial. "Poor Edith," he said, "dear Edith, what does he say?"

Weak and shattered as she was by the trials of these last days, that word of tenderness made any farther acting impossible. She went to him, and laid her hands upon his shoulders and her head upon his breast, and the tears came.

"There's no hope; she's dying. Come up-stairs—she wants to see you."

Mrs Stanburne was lying in a state of extreme exhaustion, with occasional intervals of consciousness, in which the mind was clear. When Jacob

entered the sick-room she was in one of her better moments.

"Go quite near to her," said Mr Prigley; "she can only speak in a whisper."

There had always existed a great friendship between the youth and the old lady now lying on the brink of the grave. He bent down over her, and tenderly kissed her forehead.

"God bless you!" she whispered. "Edith told you fibs last time; I know she did. I have found it all out." And even in her present weakness there came a little smile of feminine perspicacity. Then her eyes invited Jacob to bend nearer to her again.

"I shall not live long, but I shall live rather longer than they think. I shan't die to-night. I want my son—my son!"

After this supervened a syncope, which Jacob and Edith believed to be death. But the Doctor, with his larger experience, reassured them for the present. "She will live several hours," he said.

Jacob told them that she had asked for Colonel Stanburne, and added, "I have not the slightest idea where he is."

Then Edith made a sign to him to follow her, and led him down-stairs again to the little sitting-room. "Papa is a long way off; he is in France.

He must be telegraphed for." And she took a writing-case and wrote an address.

Now, although there was a telegraph from Wenderholme to Ogden's Mill at Shayton, there was none from Shayton to Sootythorn, which was the nearest town of importance. So the best way appeared to be for Jacob to ride off at once with the despatch to the station, which was ten miles off.

"And you must telegraph for mamma at the same time." And Edith wrote Lady Helena's address.

A little delay occurred now, because Jacob's horse had to be sent for to Wenderholme Hall. Edith went up-stairs, and soon came down again with rather favourable news. The syncope had not lasted long, and Mrs Stanburne seemed to rally from it somewhat more easily than she had done from the preceding ones.

"Edith," said Jacob, "will you give me a word of explanation? You were very hard and unkind last time we saw each other."

"I did very wrong. I thought I was sacrificing myself for your good. I told you nothing but lies."

Half an hour since Miss Smethurst was within a hair's-breadth of being lady of Wenderholme;

but her chances are over now, and she will not bring her fortune to this place—her coals to this Newcastle. As her late partner in the dance rides galloping, galloping through the wooded lanes to the telegraph station, his brain is full of other hopes, and of a far higher, though less brilliant, ambition. He will free himself from the Milend slavery, and work for independence—and for Edith!

CHAPTER XXXII.

After the apparition of Mr Prigley, the supper in the long gallery changed its character completely. Until he came it had been one of the merriest of festivals; after he went away, it became one of the dullest. A sense of uncomfortableness and embarrassment oppressed everybody present, and though many attempts were made to give the conversation something of its old liveliness, the guests soon became aware that for that time it was frozen beyond hope of recovery. It had been intended to resume the dancing after supper, but the dancing was not resumed, and the guests who intended to return to Shayton that night became suddenly impressed with so strong a sense of the distance of that place from Wenderholme, that all the pressing hospitality of the Ogdens availed not to retain them.

Notwithstanding the Philistinism of Mrs Og-

den's character, and the external hardness which she had in common with most of her contemporaries in Shayton, she was not without heart; and when she heard that her son had turned old Mrs Stanburne out of the Cottage, she both felt disapproval and expressed it. "Jacob," she said, "you shouldn't 'ave done so." And she repeated many a time to other people in the room, "Our Jacob shouldn't 'ave done so."

And when the carriages had departed, although there were still many people in the house, Mrs Ogden put her bonnet on, and had herself conducted to the vicarage.

The situation there might have been embarrassing for some people, but Mrs Ogden was a woman who did not feel embarrassment under any circumstances. She did what was right, or she did what was wrong, in a simple and resolute way, and her very immunity from nervous reflectiveness often enabled her to do the right thing when a self-conscious person would hardly have ventured to do it. So she knocked at Mrs Prigley's door.

It happened that the person nearest the door at that moment was Edith, who was crossing the passage from one room to another. So Edith opened the door.

Mrs Ogden walked in at once, and asked very kindly after Mrs Stanburne. Edith was pleased with the genuine interest in her manner, and showed her into the little sitting-room.

The news was rather more favourable than might have been hoped for. Mrs Stanburne had had no return of unconsciousness; and though the Doctor still thought she was gradually sinking, he began to be of opinion that her illness might be much longer than was at first anticipated, and thought that she would live to see the Colonel.

"You don't know me," said Mrs Ogden; "but as you speak of Mrs Stanburne as your grandmamma, I know who you are. You're Miss Edith. I'm little Jacob's grandmamma—Mrs Ogden of Milend, whom no doubt you've heard speak of."

Edith bowed slightly, and then there was rather an awkward pause.

"My son Jacob did very wrong about your grandmother in turning her out of her house. I wish we could make amends."

Edith tried to say something polite in acknowledgment of Mrs Ogden's advance, but it ended in tears. "I'm afraid it is too late," she said, finally.

The young lady's evident love for her grandmother won the heart of Mrs Ogden, who was

herself a grandmother. "Tell me what has been done, my dear. I know nothing about it; I only heard about it to-night. Has Mrs Stanburne removed her furniture?"

"Not quite all yet. Most of it is here, in Mr Prigley's outhouses. It was the hurry of the removal that brought on grandmamma's illness."

"Well, my dear," said the old lady, laying her hand upon Edith's, "let us pray to God that she may live. And we'll have all the furniture put back into the Cottage."

"I don't think grandmamma would consent to that. You don't know how proud she is."

"But I'll make my son come and beg her pardon. I'll make him come!"

Edith could not resist Mrs Ogden's earnestness. "I will try to bring grandmamma round, if she lives. You are very kind, Mrs Ogden."

"Now, if you'd like me to sit up with Mrs Stanburne, if you and Mrs Prigley was tired, you know? I'm an old woman, but I'm a strong one, and I can sit up well enough. I've been used to nursing. I nursed our Isaac wife all through her last illness."

"Mrs Prigley and I can do very well for to-night; but to-morrow, in the day-time, we shall need a little rest, and if you would come we should be much obliged."

"And if there was anything I could send from the great 'ouse—any jellies or blomonge?"

"Thank you; if we want anything we will send for it to the Hall."

Mrs Ogden rose to take her leave, which she did very affectionately. "I am very sorry for you, my dear," she said, "and I am angry at our Jacob. He shouldn't 'ave done so—he shouldn't 'ave done so." And then she kissed Edith in a maternal way, and departed.

She had no notion of abdicating parental authority—no idea that, because a lad happened to be twenty-one, or thirty-one, or forty-one, he was to be free to do exactly as he liked. And when she got back to the Hall, and the guests were in bed, she treated "our Jacob" *en petit garçon* just as if he had been fifteen. She informed him that Mrs Stanburne's furniture would be reinstated in Wenderholme Cottage immediately, and that if she recovered he would have to go there and eat humble-pie. "An' if who doesn't get better, it'll be thee as has murdered her; and thou'll desarve to be hanged for't, same as Bill o' great John's* as shot old Nanny Suthers wi' a pistil."

* A common form of sobriquet in Lancashire.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Mrs Ogden returned to the vicarage the next day, and found Mrs Stanburne in the same condition of extreme exhaustion. The Rigton doctor had arrived in the interval, and relieved Dr Bardly, who returned to Shayton. The two medical men had expressed the same opinion—namely, that the old lady was gradually, but quite surely, sinking.

Mrs Ogden took her place by the bedside, and relieved Mrs Prigley and Edith. The patient being perfectly conscious, and in possession of all her mental faculties, Edith had told her about Mrs Ogden's first visit; and when she came near the bedside, Mrs Stanburne held out her hand, or rather attempted to do so — for she had not strength to lift it—and it fell upon the counterpane. Then she whispered a few words of thanks and welcome. "My son Jacob shouldn't have

done so—he shouldn't have done so," said Mrs Ogden; and in reply there came faint syllables of forgiveness. Then Mrs Ogden asked Mrs Stanburne if she would prove her forgiveness by going back to Wenderholme Cottage.

"If I live, I will."

"Live! why you're sure to live. You're quite a young woman. Look at me, how strong I am, and I'm older than you are. It's nothing but the hurry and worry of leaving your 'ouse that you was accustomed to that's brought you down in this way. You'll get well again—I'm sure you will; only, we must take care of you. Now we've had enough talking for the present, and I'll get my sewing; and if you want anything, I'll fetch it for you."

Then the strong old woman sat down by the bedside of the weaker one, and from that time forth established herself as one of her recognised nurses, and by no means the least efficient. In one essential point she was superior both to Edith and Mrs Prigley—she was less melancholy and more encouraging. The others could not help crying, and the patient saw that they had been crying, which made her feel as if she were assisting at her own funeral; whereas Mrs Ogden kept a cheerful countenance, and, though as gentle

as a woman could be, had nevertheless a fine firmness and courage which made Mrs Stanburne feel that she could rely upon her. Another immense advantage was, that in the presence of this hale and active example of a vigorous old age, Mrs Stanburne altogether ceased to feel the burden of her years, and began to consider herself simply as a sick person in a state of temporary exhaustion, instead of an old woman whose thread of life had come to its inevitable end. Indeed, Mrs Ogden had not been long with the invalid before both of them had given up the theory that she was gradually sinking, and replaced it by more hopeful views.

Young Jacob's interest in Mrs Stanburne's health proved to be so strong that he could hardly absent himself from the vicarage; yet though Mrs Ogden must have been perfectly well aware that he passed a good deal of his time there with Miss Edith, she showed no sign of displeasure, but when she found them together, seemed to consider it perfectly natural, and spoke to Edith always affectionately, calling her "my dear," and putting an unaccustomed tenderness even into the very tones of her voice. The lord of Wenderholme and his remaining guests left for Shayton in the course of the afternoon, but

Mrs Ogden declared her intention of remaining until her patient was out of danger; and though her son had suggested that young Jacob was not absolutely necessary as a nurse, Mrs Ogden asserted that it was "a great comfort" to her to have him near her, and that he should go back to Milend with his grandmother at such times as she might see fit to return thither. Jacob Ogden was a wilful and a mighty man; but either from habit or some genuine filial sentiment, or perhaps because no man can be really happy unless he is governed by a woman of some sort—either a wife, or a mother, or a maiden aunt—this hard and terrible master-spirit submitted to "the old woman" without question, and whatever *she* willed was done.

In saying that all Jacob Ogden's guests went back with him to Shayton, an exception must be made in the case of his elder brother. Captain Ogden, as he was now generally called (for the people had gradually got into the habit of giving militia officers their titles), remained at Wenderholme, for reasons of his own. He knew that Colonel Stanburne had been telegraphed for, and wished to see him. Perhaps, too, he thought it might be agreeable to John Stanburne to find a sincere friend in his old place, and that he might

be able in some degree to mitigate the painfulness of an unavoidable return to scenes which could not be revisited without awakening many regretful associations.

As all the Prigley children were at school except Conny, now a young lady who was supposed to have "come out," though in fact no such ceremony had taken place, from the want of any society to come out in, the vicarage was able to accommodate a good many guests, and the Prigleys were only too happy to place it at the disposal of the family to whom they owed their recent advancement in the world. It was a pleasant and spacious, though not a very elegant, house; and there was a large garden, and an orchard, and a glebe of two or three fields, with sufficient stabling and outhouses. They had set up a small pony-carriage, or rather continued that which belonged to the late vicar, which they had purchased at the sale, with pony and harness complete, for the moderate sum of nine guineas; and Conny Prigley set off in this machine to await the train by which Lady Helena was expected to arrive. This arrangement was made without Mrs Ogden's knowledge, and when she came to be aware of it, she exclaimed, "Well, now, I wish I'd known—I do

indeed, I *wish* I'd known—for there's my cayridge at the 'All, which is quite at your service. Our Jacob's gone back with Miss Smethurst, and he's left me my cayridge, which you would have been quite welcome to." But the Prigleys had tact enough to know, that although her ladyship rather liked to be magnificent, she might not particularly care for it to be Mrs Ogden's magnificence; and that the little green pony-carriage, driven by Conny Prigley, was a more suitable vehicle to bring her ladyship to the vicarage than the sumptuous chariot in which Mrs Ogden had triumphed the day before.

Lady Helena duly arrived. It did not require much explanation from Edith to make the whole situation quite clear to her perspicuous mind. She went up-stairs to see Mrs Stanburne, who was grateful to her for coming so soon, and the first person she saw in the room was Mrs Ogden.

There was a little stiffness at first, but it did not last long. Lady Helena and Mrs Ogden got into conversation about the state of the patient, and then about other matters connected with what might be called the diocese of the lady of Wenderholme. Had Mrs Ogden been one of the examples, so numerous in these days, of amazingly refined ladyhood in the middle classes, Lady

Helena might have been jealous of her; but how was it possible for her ladyship to feel jealous of a simple old woman like Mrs Ogden, who spoke broad Lancashire, and in every movement of her body, and every utterance of her lips, proclaimed the humility of her birth? Lady Helena, moreover, had a keen sense of humour, and it was impossible not to feel interested and amused, as soon as the first anxiety about Mrs Stanburne was at least temporarily tranquillised, by Mrs Ogden's quaint turns of expression, and her wonderful reliance on her own wisdom and experience. Even Mrs Stanburne, ill as she was, could not help smiling, as she lay in her bed of sickness, when Mrs Ogden came out with some of those sayings which were peculiarly her own.

The condition of the invalid had become less distressing and less alarming, though the doctor still held out no hopes of a recovery. Mrs Ogden, however, had succeeded in making the patient believe that she would get better because she believed it herself, and she believed it herself because the idea of a person dying of mere weakness at the early age of seventy-two was not admissible to her patriarchal mind. It was a great thing for Mrs Stanburne to have somebody near her who did not consider that she was used

up, and she began to regard Mrs Ogden with the partiality which human nature always feels for those who preach comfortable doctrine.

As there were so many ladies to nurse Mrs Stanburne, and as the invalid now gave comparatively little immediate anxiety, Edith easily got Lady Helena to herself for half an hour.

The young lady was firmly resolved upon one thing—namely, that this opportunity for a reconciliation between her father and mother should not be lost through any pusillanimity of hers.

"Mamma," she said, boldly, "why did you leave papa when he was ruined?"

"Because he ordered me to leave him; because he turned me out of the house."

"But why did he do so? It is quite contrary to his character to turn anybody out. When he dismissed the servants, he did it very kindly, and only because he could not afford to keep them."

Lady Helena remained silent.

"Do tell me, mamma, why he behaved so. It isn't like him; you know it isn't like him."

"There are people, Edith," said her ladyship, "who commit great follies; and then, when the misfortunes come which they themselves have caused, they cannot endure to hear one word of blame. They must be pitied and sympathised

with, and then they are very nice and amiable; but if you express the least censure, they fly into a passion and insult you."

"You mean that you censured papa for his imprudence, and that he got angry."

"I said very little to him. I said a few words which were strictly true. I never scold."

"No, mamma, you never scold; but scolding would be easier to bear than your blame. I see how it all was; you blamed papa in two or three terribly just and severe words, and then, after that, you said nothing to console him in his misery, and he became irritable, and said something hasty."

Lady Helena said nothing to this, but she did not look displeased; and she showed no inclination either to leave the room or to change the subject.

"Dear mamma, I don't think you did wrong in blaming papa's imprudence; but if you had given him one word of kindness afterwards, you would never have lost him."

"Is not this rather——"

"Impertinent from a daughter, you mean to say. You know I don't want to be impertinent, mamma; but I'm old enough to be of some use, and I mean to be, too, whether your ladyship

is quite satisfied or not. Are you aware that papa will be here to-morrow?"

"It is natural that he should come here, as his mother is ill."

"And when he comes, we must do what we can to help him to bear his afflictions, I suppose."

"Certainly."

"Well, we won't pass any more votes of censure, mamma, will we? And we shall forgive him his trespasses, shall we not?"

To this Lady Helena made no reply; but her face wore a new and a softer expression. This encouraged Edith, who continued:—

"He has suffered enough. He has been living all by himself in a miserable little French town on the Loire. I have a whole heap of his letters. He told me everything about his situation. Grandpapa has been allowing him three hundred a-year—he has never touched a penny of it; it is paid regularly to grandmamma Stanburne, who does not know that she is ruined, and who fancies that papa has an allowance, and lives abroad for his pleasure. His letters to her are all about amusements, but he writes to me sincerely, and *I* know what his life has been. He has got a post as English master in a school, and they pay him twenty-five francs a-week, but he gives

lessons in the town, and gets two francs a lesson, only he has not many of these. He is *en pension* in an inn. It is a miserably lonely life. I would have gone to him, but I could not leave grandmamma."

Lady Helena's eyes glistened in the firelight. They were brimming with tears. "You should have told me this sooner, Edith," she said, at last.

"Would you have gone to him? Would you have gone to live with him there, in his lodgings, and cheer him after his day's work?"

"I have been less happy, Edith, during these last months, than I should have been with him, wherever he is, however poor he is."

After this avowal of her ladyship, the chances are great, I think, that the Colonel will be agreeably received at the vicarage. Miss Edith communicated as much to the worthy vicar himself, who, though with Anglican discretion he would have avoided intruding in the character of peacemaker, thought it a duty to encourage Lady Helena in the path of charity and forgiveness.

"Forgive him heartily and entirely anything you may have to forgive. Go to him at once when he comes. All your days will be blessed for this."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

In the evening came a telegram from the Colonel, dated from Dover, and announcing his arrival for the following morning. "What a pity it is," said Lady Helena, "that he did not give us a London address! we might have spared him a whole night of anxiety." She was thinking about him just as she used to think about him in their happiest years.

On reference to the time-table, it appeared that the Colonel would arrive at the station at about eight o'clock in the morning. When Captain Ogden heard of this, he said he would go to meet him, and so did young Jacob; and Mrs Ogden offered her carriage, and, in short, there was a general fuss, to which Lady Helena suddenly put an end by declaring her intention of going to meet him herself in the little pony-carriage that belonged to the vicarage. Mr Prigley smiled

approbation, and assured her ladyship that he would lend her that humble equipage with great pleasure, meaning a great deal more than he said.

So Lady Helena drove off in the little green carriage at six o'clock in the morning; for the station, as the reader may remember, was ten miles from Wenderholme, and it was necessary to bait the pony before he came back. It was a rude little equipage altogether, not very well hung, and by no means elegant in its proportions. The pony, too, in anticipation of winter, was beginning to put on his rough coat, and his harness had long since lost any brilliance it might have once possessed. The morning was cold and raw, and a chilly grey dawn was in the east—an aurora of the least encouraging kind, which one always feels disposed to be angry at for coming and disturbing the yet more cheerful darkness. Some people at the vicarage were astonished that Mr Prigley should allow her ladyship to drive off alone in this dreary way at six o'clock in the morning; but then these people did not know all that Mr Prigley knew. When Lady Helena got into the carriage, the vicar shook hands with her in an uncommonly affectionate manner, just as if she had been leaving him for a very long time, and then he said something to her in a very low

tone. "Dear Lady Helena," he said, "God bless you!" and it is my firm belief that if Mrs Prigley had not been within sight, that vicar would have given Lady Helena a kiss.

Away went the pony through the darkling lanes, with the rattling machine after him. Poor pony! he had often done that long journey to the station, and done it with reasonable celerity, but he had never trotted so fast as he trotted now. Can it be the early morning air that so exhilarates her ladyship? Her face is so bright and cheerful that it conquers the dreariness of the hour, and brings a better sunshine than the grey October dawn. How little we know under what circumstances we shall enjoy the purest and sweetest felicity! This little woman had been in lordly equipages, in all sorts of splendid pleasures and stately ceremonies; she had been drawn by magnificent horses, with a powdered coachman on the box, and a cluster of lacqueys behind; she had gone in diamonds and feathers to St James's; better still, she had driven through the fairest scenery under cloudless skies, when all nature rejoiced around her. All the luxury that skilled craftsmen can produce in combination had been hers; carriages hung so delicately, and cushioned so softly, that they seemed to float on

air; harness that seemed as if its only purpose were to enhance the beauty of the horses which it adorned; liveries, varnish, silver, and the rest of it. And yet, of all the drives that Lady Helena had ever taken in her whole life, *this* was the most delightful, this drive in the dreary dawn of an October morning in a rattling little carriage with stiff springs, painted like a park paling, and drawn by a shaggy pony at the rate of six miles an hour!

She reached the station half an hour before the train came, and sat a little in the waiting-room, and walked about on the platform, in a state of nervous fidgetiness and anxiety. At length the bell rang, and the engine came round a curve, and grew bigger and bigger, and her heart beat faster and faster. "There he is, poor John, getting out of a third-class carriage!" Lady Helena had been seeking him amongst the well-to-do first-class passengers.

She ran to him, and took his hand in both hers, and said, "She's better, love—a good deal better since yesterday." And the tears ran down her cheeks.

The Colonel looked at her for a moment, and took both her hands, and would have said something, or perhaps gone so far as to give her just

one little kiss on the forehead—which is a wonderful thing for an Englishman to achieve in a railway station—but these good intentions were frustrated by the guard, who, in rather a peremptory way, demanded to know whether he had any luggage.

John Stanburne felt like a man in a dream. Going back to Wenderholme, no longer his, with Helena, his own Helena once more! It was not in his nature to cherish the least vindictive feeling, and that one word of his wife had wiped away every evil recollection. When they got into the little pony-carriage, and were out of hearing of the hostler, the Colonel turned to her ladyship, and said,—

"I owe you a great many apologies, dear. I behaved very badly the last time we were together, but I was upset, you know. You are a good woman to come and meet me in this way, and forgive me. I have meant to write to you many a time and say how sorry I was, but I put it off because—because——"

It is well that the pony was quiet, and knew its own way to Wenderholme, for when they got into an uncommonly retired lane, with very high hedges, her ladyship, who was driving, threw the reins down, and embraced the gentleman by her

side in an extraordinary manner. Then came passionate tears, and after that she grew calmer. "What geese we were to fancy we could live separately!" she said.

And then they talked incessantly the whole way. She asked him a thousand questions about his life abroad,—how he passed his evenings, whether he had found any society, and so on. As the Colonel told her about his humble, lonely life, she listened with perfect sympathy; and when he said that some people had been kind to him, and got him pupils, she wanted to know all about them. "I'm getting on famously," said the Colonel. "I'm earning nearly sixty francs a-week, and I pronounce French better than I used to do."

And after that they talked downright nonsense, and became quite silly, which did them both an immensity of good.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Since we are obliged to leave the vicarage now, the reader must be told the exact truth about Mrs Stanburne's condition. It continued to give great anxiety for several weeks, and all her friends, even including the doctors, gave her up over and over again, believing that she had not more than an hour or two to live; yet she always passed through these times of danger, and gradually, very gradually, begin to feel rather stronger in the month of December. The season of the year was not favourable to her, but Dr Bardly hoped that if she could be sustained till the return of spring, she would regain her strength, at least in a great measure, and probably have several years of life still before her. She bore the winter better than had been expected, though without quitting her room at the vicarage, and

in the month of April entered upon a convalescence which astonished all around her.

The old lady's illness led to very important consequences. Since the period of her danger was protracted, her friends remained near her day after day, and week after week, always believing that they were performing the last duty by a deathbed. A great sadness reigned in the vicarage during all this season of watching, but it was sadness of the kind which is most favourable to sympathy and good feeling. The vicar and his good wife, so far from feeling the presence of the invalid and their other guests a burden, were glad that it was in their power to do anything for her and for them; and whilst the old lady lay upon her bed of sickness she was producing happier and more important results, simply by throwing certain persons together by invisible bonds of mutual approval and a common anxiety, than she could ever have achieved by an active ingerence in their affairs. Everybody who loved old Mrs Stanburne was grateful to everybody who gave proof of a real interest in her condition; and the majestic approach of death, whose shadow lay on the vicarage so long, subdued all its inhabitants into a more perfect spiritual harmony than they would ever

have attained to amongst the distractions of gayer, though not happier, days. Lady Helena was admirable. There was a tenderness and a simplicity in her manner which pleased the Colonel greatly, and won the warm approval of the vicar. She devoted herself mainly to the care of Mrs Stanburne, but, saying that exercise was necessary to enable her to do her duty as a nurse, made the Colonel walk out with her every day. These walks were delightful to both of them—for even though the scenery about the village of Wenderholme was full of painful associations, their sense of loss was more than balanced by the sense of a yet larger gain; and the future, though it could not have the external brilliance of the past, promised a deeper and more firm felicity. Sadness and unhappiness are two very different conditions of the mind, and it does not follow that because we are saddened we are incapable of being very happy in a certain quiet and not unenviable way. Indeed, it might even be asserted, that as

"Our sweetest songs are those which tell of saddest thought"—

so it is with life itself, as well as poetry, and that our sweetest hours are far from being our gayest.

It had become tacitly understood that neither

Lady Helena nor Mrs Ogden would offer any opposition to the marriage between Jacob and Edith. Whatever Mrs Ogden determined to do, she did in a thorough and effectual manner; and as she had resolved that amends ought to be made to the Stanburnes for her son's conduct to the old lady, she considered that the best way to do this would be to receive Edith kindly into her family. In this resolution she was greatly helped by a genuine approval of the young lady herself. "There's some girls as brings fortunes," she said to young Jacob, "and there's other girls as *is* a fortune themselves, and I think Miss Stanburne will be as good as a fortune to any one who may marry her." Nor had this opinion been lightly arrived at, for during her frequent visits to the vicarage, Mrs Ogden had studied Edith, much in the same way as an entomologist studies an insect under a microscope.

One day, when the weather became a little warmer, Lady Helena said to the Colonel, "Don't you think, dear, that we ought to go and call upon that old Mrs Ogden at the Hall? She has been exceedingly kind in coming to sit with mamma. I would have suggested it sooner, but I was afraid it might be painful for you, dear, to go to the old house again."

So they set out and walked to the Hall together, both of them feeling very strange feelings, indeed, as they passed up the familiar avenue. When they came at last in sight of the great house, John Stanburne paused and gazed upon it for a long time without speaking. It stood just as he had left it—none of the carved Stanburne shields had been removed. "I'm glad they've altered nothing, Helena," he said.

Then they met their old gardener, who spoke to them with the tears in his eyes. "It's different for us to what it used to be, my lady," he said; "not but what Mrs Ogden is a good woman, but her son's a hard master."

"We were coming to see Mrs Ogden," said Lady Helena; "do you know if she is at home?"

"You won't find her in the house, my lady; but if you will come this way, I'll take you to where she is."

Nature always puts some element of comedy into the most touching circumstances, and saves us from morbid feelings by glimpses of the ludicrous side of life. Thus, although the gardener had had tears in his eyes when he saw the Colonel and Lady Helena, there was a smile upon his face as he led them in the direction of the stables.

"Your ladyship will find Mrs Ogden in that

carriage," he said, pointing to the magnificent Ogden chariot, which stood, as if to air itself, without horses, in the middle of the yard. When he had said this, the gardener made his bow and disappeared, smiling with keen satisfaction at what he had just done.

The visitors were much surprised, but, as the gardener well knew, curiosity alone was strong enough to make them go up to the carriage and see whether there was anybody inside it. The Colonel peeped in at the window, and saw Mrs Ogden sitting in the vehicle, apparently in quite a settled and permanent way, for she had her knitting.

"Eh, well, it's the Colonel and her ladyship, I declare!" cried Mrs Ogden, opening the carriage-door. "Come and get in—do get in—it's very comfortable. I often come and sit here a bit of an afternoon with my knitting. But what perhaps you'd rather go and sit a bit i' th' 'ouse?"

They got inside the carriage with the old lady, and their amusement at this circumstance quite relieved those feelings of melancholy which had naturally taken possession of them on revisiting Wenderholme. The conversation was quite agreeable and animated, and half an hour passed very rapidly. After that, the callers proposed to depart.

"Nay," said Mrs Ogden, "you willn't be going away so soon, will you? Come into th' 'ouse, now—*do* come and have a glass of wine."

Lady Helena promised that they would come to the house another day, but said that she wished to go back to Mrs Stanburne. On this Mrs Ogden said, "Well, then, if you *will* go back, sit you still." And she let down the glass and called out in a loud voice for the horses.

The horses were put to the carriage, and the visitors shortly found themselves in motion towards the vicarage, which proves the advantage of receiving friends in a small drawing-room on four wheels. The incident created a great deal of amusement, and even old Mrs Stanburne laughed at it very heartily. Very trifling and absurd things are often of great use in putting people in a good temper, and chasing melancholy ideas; and Mrs Ogden's fancy for sitting in her carriage developed a wonderful amount of kindly humour at the vicarage. Nothing does people more good than laughing at their neighbours, and they love their neighbours all the better for having laughed at them; so Mrs Ogden's popularity at the vicarage was increased by this incident, and I daresay it accelerated Mrs Stanburne's recovery in an appreciable, though not ascertainable, degree.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Immediately after the Colonel's return from France, Captain Ogden went back to his solitude at Twistle Farm, but his son spent a good deal of his time with old Mrs Ogden at Wenderholme. Jacob Ogden, senior, came to Wenderholme frequently to look after the work-people on the estate, but did not mark his disapproval of his nephew's proceedings otherwise than by quietly excluding him from all participation in his affairs. Although the young man passed a great deal more time at Wenderholme than his uncle did, he was never requested, and he never offered, to do any of the duties of an overlooker, and his uncle treated him strictly upon the footing of a visitor —a visitor, not to himself, but to his mother. There is so much firmness in the character of the typical Lancashire man, that he can assume, and maintain for an indefinite length of time, an atti-

tude towards a friend or relation which would be impossible for more mobile temperaments; and young Jacob knew his uncle well enough to be aware that having once decided upon his line of conduct, there was every probability that he would follow it without deviation. Therefore, although young Jacob could have made himself of the greatest use at Wenderholme without interfering either with his amusement of shooting or his dutiful attendance upon Miss Edith, he paid no more attention to the work-people than if they had been employed by some proprietor entirely unknown to him. It is unnecessary to add, that when at Twistle Farm, where he spent about one week out of three, he never went near his uncle's factories.

And yet, notwithstanding the apparent indifference with which Jacob Ogden dispensed with his nephew's services, they were more than ever necessary to him. The great factories at Shayton were enough of themselves to absorb the whole time of a very active master; but, in addition to these, Jacob Ogden was now working the calico-printing establishment at Whittlecup, which had formerly belonged to Mr Joseph Anison, and carrying out extensive improvements, not only upon the Wenderholme estate, but upon many other

properties of his, scattered over the neighbouring parishes, and often at a considerable distance from his headquarters at Milend. Though his constitution was a strong one, he had always taxed its strength to the utmost; and his powers were not what they had been, nor what he still believed them to be. He might have gone on for many years in the old routine that he had been accustomed to—for a hard-worked man will endure labour that seems beyond his present strength if he merely continues the habits of his better time. But a man already in the decline of life cannot *add* to his labour without danger, if it is already excessive, and especially if the new labours require thought and study before they can be fully mastered. The improvements at Wenderholme, to an experienced landowner like Jacob Ogden, required no new apprenticeship; but that was not the case with the calico-printing business at Whittlecup. It was a new trade that had to be learned, and not a very easy trade—not nearly so simple as cotton-spinning. He applied himself to it with that indomitable will and resolution which had hitherto overcome every obstacle in his career, and he rapidly acquired the new knowledge that he needed. But this effort, in addition to the enormous burden of his daily

work—the daily work of a rich man who could not endure to be robbed, and would trust nothing to his agents—began to tell upon his cerebral system in a peculiar manner; and these effects were the more dangerous that Jacob Ogden had no conception of the terrible nature of the enemy that was invading him, but believed this enemy might be conquered by his will and perseverance, as every other obstacle had been. If he had frankly consulted Dr Bardly on the appearance of the first symptoms, and followed the advice which Dr Bardly would have given, the evil would have been checked in time; but he felt a certain hostility to the Doctor, which disinclined him to communications which he did not feel to be immediately necessary; and even if this could have been laid aside, a man so wilful as Jacob Ogden, and so accustomed to look after his own affairs, would scarcely have consented under present circumstances to give up the management of his business to his nephew, and retire to a premature and inglorious repose.

Hitherto he had gone through his work with great energy, in combination with perfect calm. The energy still remained, it even increased; but the calm did not remain—it was succeeded by a perpetual hurry and fever. In a short time after

these symptoms first developed themselves, Jacob Ogden could not add up a column of figures without excitement; when he came to the totals his heart beat violently, and he began to make mistakes, which he perceived, and was afterwards nervously anxious to avoid. As his malady increased, he could not open a letter without emotion, or sign a cheque without a strong effort of self-control; in a word, the nervous system was rapidly giving way. And instead of taking rest, which could alone have restored him to health—rest at Wenderholme amongst his own fair fields in the beautiful months of spring—he persisted and persisted, and would not allow himself to be beaten.

The people about him did not know anything of his condition. He was more irritable, he pushed everybody faster than he had formerly done, and he was constantly moving from one place to another; but his determination to control himself was so strong, and his power of *appearing* well still so considerable, that such people as Mrs Ogden and young Jacob (unaccustomed as they both were to that kind of suffering, and incapable of imagining it) had not the most distant suspicion that he had become unfit for work. Indeed, although an experienced London physician, who had made brain disease his particular

study, would no doubt have seen at a glance that this was a case which needed the most watchful care, it may be doubted whether a country practitioner (even so clever, naturally, as Dr Bardly) would have warned Jacob Ogden in time.

The overtasked brain translated its own dangerous condition by *anxiety*, and the anxiety was not about health, but, as often happens in such instances, about that subject which had most occupied the patient's mind before the approaches of disease—namely, money. With all his riches, Jacob Ogden grew more nervously anxious about money-matters than the poorest labourer on his estate. His mind ran incessantly upon possible causes of loss; and as in the best-regulated property such causes are always infinitely numerous, he found them only too easily. The thousands of details which, when in health, he had carried in his head as lightly as we carry the words of a thoroughly-mastered language, began to torment him with the apprehension that they might escape his memory; and whereas, in his better days, no fact troubled him except just at the moment when he wanted it, they now importunately intruded upon his mind when they could only disturb and confuse it.

At length, as his disease advanced towards its

sure and terrible development, the ANXIETY, which was the form it had taken, and the mental hurry and worry which accompanied it, arrived at such a pitch that the least delicate and acute observers remarked it in Jacob Ogden's face. His mother earnestly entreated him not to torment himself so much about his affairs, but to take a partner, and allow himself more rest. The advice came too late. The tender cells of the cerebrum were in a state of fevered disturbance, which must now inevitably lead to one of the forms of madness.

It broke out one night at Wenderholme. He toiled till three o'clock in the morning, alone, at his accounts. There was nothing in them which he would not have mastered quite easily when in health, but the condition of his brain had led to many errors, and the attempt to correct these had only increased and multiplied them. He toiled and toiled till his brain could no longer stand the confusion, and he went mad.

First there came a sense of strangeness to everything about him, and then a wild alarm—a *terror* such as he had never known! For a few minutes reason fiercely struggled to keep her seat, and would not be dispossessed. Those minutes were the most fearful the man had ever passed through. He sprang from his place, and

paced the room from wall to wall in violent agitation. "I'm very ill," he thought; "I cannot tell what's the matter with me. I believe I'm going to have a fit. No, it isn't that—it isn't that; I know what it is—I know now—*I'm going mad!*"

No visible external foe can ever be so terrible as the mysterious internal avengers. They come upon us we know not when nor where. They come when the doors are locked, the mansion guarded, and all the household sleeps. They come in their terrible invisibility, like devils taking possession. The strokes of mortal disease are dealt mysteriously *within;* and who would not rather meet a body of armed savages than invisible apoplexy or paralysis?

For five minutes Ogden wrestled with his invisible enemy. I *will* not go mad," he cried aloud—"I *will* not!"

And a minute afterwards the struggle ceased, and he was another being, mad beyond hope of recovery.

A strange smile came over his face, and he pressed his hand upon his forehead. "I'll dodge them yet," he said; "they aren't as sharp as I am. I'm sharper than the best of them!"

He began to count the money in his purse. It

was not much—five pounds eighteen exactly. He counted the sum quite correctly, over and over again; then he looked anxiously about for a place to hide it in. Whilst he was doing this, his mother, who had felt anxious about him all night, and had been unable to sleep, came to his room-door and listened. She heard him walking about and muttering to himself. Then she opened the door and went in.

He concealed his purse cunningly, and placed himself between the intruder and its hiding-place.

"Jacob," she said, "you ought to be in bed; why are you up like that? It's three o'clock in the morning."

He began to talk very rapidly. He knew his mother perfectly well. "Mother," he said, "when bailiffs comes you willn't tell 'em where I have hid my brass; see, I've hidden it here, but you willn't tell 'em, mother?" And then he lifted up a corner of the carpet and showed his little purse.

Mrs Ogden trembled from head to foot. "Our Jacob's crazed," she said to herself—"our Jacob's gone crazed."

She felt too weak to remain standing, and sat down, never taking her eyes off him. He put the

purse back, and covered it again with great care. Then he took his memorandum-book, and seemed to be making an entry.

"Let me look at that book," Mrs Ogden said.

It was as she had feared. The entry was a hopelessly illegible jumble of unmeaning lines and figures.

"Hadn't you better go to bed?"

"Go to bed, mother—not if I know it!" He said this with a smile of intense cunning, and then added, confidentially, "The bailiffs are comin' to-morrow, and Baron Rothschild has bought all my property, a large price, a million sterling—a million sterling; it's Baron Rothschild that bought it, mother, for a million sterling!"

The poor old woman burst into tears. "O Jacob!" she said, "I wish you wouldn't talk so!"

"Why, mother," he replied, with an injured air, and a look of intense penetration, "you know well enough what I failed for. I never should have failed if it hadn't been for that Sootythorn Bank; but they came to borrow money of me at Milend, and I took up shares for a hundred thousand, and then the smash came, and I failed. But never you mind, mother. Baron Rothschild bought my estates for a million sterling. That

shows I was a millionaire. Doesn't it, mother? for if I hadn't been worth a million, Baron Rothschild wouldn't have given a million for my property. He willn't give more for property than what it's worth."

"O Jacob! you do make me miserable with talking so."

She did not know what to do with him. Young Jacob and her son Isaac were both at Twistle Farm. At last she thought of Colonel Stanburne, who was staying at Wenderholme Cottage. She left her son for a few minutes, and sent a messenger for the Colonel. On returning to Jacob's room, she found him busy counting his money over again. He had taken the purse from its hiding-place.

The strength of her own nervous system was such that she bore even this appalling event with firmness. She was grieved beyond power of expression, but she was not overcome.

Happily there was no violence in Jacob Ogden's madness; he was not in the least dangerous. He simply kept repeating that story about his supposed failure, which he always attributed to the Sootythorn Bank, and the purchase of his property by Baron Rothschild. When the Colonel came, he told him the same story in the same words.

"You are mistaken on one point," the Colonel said. "It was I, Colonel Stanburne, who was ruined by the failure of the Sootythorn Bank, not you. You were never ruined. You purchased Wenderholme."

Mr Ogden looked at him with the air of a professional man when a layman has advanced something which he knows to be absurd. Then he shook his head, and repeated the story about Baron Rothschild.

The Colonel kindly remained with him till morning, and bravely watched him through the dreary hours. A messenger had been despatched on horseback to Twistle Farm and to Dr Bardly. Isaac Ogden and his son were at Wenderholme by breakfast-time, and the Doctor's brougham drove up very shortly afterwards.

Dr Bardly tried to be encouraging. "He has been working too much," he said, "and made himself too anxious; he may get round again with rest and care. Give him good roast-meat and plenty of physical work."

But about ten o'clock Jacob Ogden became anxious to quit Wenderholme, being full of apprehension about the bailiffs. "Better let him have his own way," said the Doctor; so he was taken to Milend.

At Milend, however, there were other causes of anxiety. The bailiffs tormented him at Wenderholme; the idea of Baron Rothschild haunted him at Milend.

The experiment was tried of showing him the factory and the counting-house, but with most discouraging results. The factory produced a degree of excitement which, if continued, would probably lead to madnesss of an aggravated and far more dangerous kind.

Specialists were telegraphed for from Manchester and from London, and a consultation was held. They agreed that the patient must be kept out of the way of everything that might remind him of his former career, recommending extreme tranquillity, good but simple diet, and as much physical exercise as the patient could be induced to take.

These might be had conveniently in Mrs Ogden's favourite little farm, the Creampot. It was situated in a glen or clough, out of sight of the Shayton factory-chimneys.

So the old lady went there to live with her afflicted son. She could manage him better than anybody else, and he was never dangerous.

After a time, a happy discovery was made. He counted the money in his purse several times

a-day, and Mrs Ogden told him that if he would dig their little garden, she would pay him wages. He seized upon this idea with great joy and eagerness, and she paid him a sovereign on the Saturday night. The week following he worked very hard, and counted the days, and spoke of his anticipated earnings with delight. So his mother paid him another sovereign, and ever afterwards this became the rule, and she employed him at a pound a-week.

He kept all the sovereigns in his purse, and they were his joy and treasure. His physical health became excellent, and though his intellect gave no hope of restoration, his days passed not unhappily. His mother tended him with the most touching devotion, and a self-sacrifice so absolute that she ceased to visit her friends, and abandoned all the little amusements and varieties of her life.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The long illness and slow convalescence of Mrs Stanburne, and the deplorable mental affliction which fell upon Jacob Ogden, and threw a cloud of lasting sadness over the whole Ogden family, produced long delays in the projects of young Jacob and Edith, and were the cause of much indecision on the part of the Colonel and Lady Helena. Mrs Stanburne returned to Wenderholme Cottage in the earliest days of spring, but the Colonel and his wife had already stayed there for many weeks, being anxious not to abuse the kind hospitality of the vicarage. The vicar's sentiments when they left him were of a mixed kind. He was glad, and he was sorry. In his gladness there was no selfish calculation—the Stanburnes were welcome to everything he could offer them; but in his warm approval of Lady Helena's conduct towards the Colonel, he had been a little

too demonstrative to be quite agreeable to Mrs Prigley, and therefore Mrs Prigley had thought it incumbent upon her, as a British matron of unspotted virtue, to make his life as miserable as she could. Mrs Ogden, too, had inflamed Mrs Prigley's jealousy in another way by coming and nursing Mrs Stanburne. What right had one of those "nasty Ogdens" to come and nurse Mrs Stanburne? Mrs Prigley looked upon the invalid as exclusively her own property. Edith, being young and insignificant, might sit a little with her grandmother—but Mrs Ogden!

If Lady Helena had not come just in time to take upon herself a good deal of this now inflamed and awakened jealousy, the consequence would have been that poor Mrs Prigley would have incurred grave suspicions of an amorous intrigue with the old lady of Milend; but as Lady Helena was younger than Mrs Prigley, and Mrs Ogden a good deal her senior, the vicaress paid her husband the compliment of believing that he had placed his sinful affections on the more eligible of the two ladies. So soon, therefore, as she had ascertained to her own satisfaction the culpability of the guilty pair (and when the commonest politeness was evidence, proofs were not far to seek), the vicaress treated her ladyship with the

haughty coldness which is the proper behaviour of a virtuous and injured woman towards her sinful rival, and she treated her husband as his abominable wickedness deserved. In a word, she made life utterly insupportable for Mr Prigley.

Lady Helena saw the true situation of affairs before the parson did (for he in his masculine simplicity attributed his wife's behaviour to any cause but the right one), and she migrated at once to the Cottage with the Colonel. When Mrs Stanburne was well enough to bear the removal, she was brought back to her old house, and continued steadily to improve. Still her health was far from being strong enough to make the idea of leaving her an admissible one, so the Colonel and Lady Helena remained at Wenderholme a long time. Young Jacob came frequently to see Edith, but the marriage, though now agreed upon by all parties, was indefinitely postponed.

Whilst matters were in this state of suspension, the relation between Mr Jacob Ogden and his family had to be legally settled. His brother Isaac received the factories and estates, in trust, conjointly with his mother, with the usufruct thereof, £500 a-year being set aside for the patient's maintenance. On account of the urgency of the situation, but much against the grain of

his now acquired habits, Mr Isaac Ogden quitted his solitude at Twistle Farm, and resumed, at Milend, the life of a cotton-manufacturer, in partnership with his son.

Meanwhile Colonel Stanburne's position was, from the financial point of view, anything but brilliant. He had no income, after paying the allowance to his mother, except a share in the £300 a-year remaining to his wife. He was anxious to return to France and resume the humble profession which he had found for himself there. Lady Helena said that wherever he went she would go too, and nothing but the slowness of Mrs Stanburne's recovery prevented them from leaving England.

They were in this state—being, as things in life often are, in a sort of temporary but indefinite lull and calm—when an event occurred which produced the most important changes.

Mr John Stedman being on a visit to his friend at Stanithburn Peel, took one of his customary long walks amongst the wild rocky hills in that neighbourhood, and was caught—not for the first time—in a sudden storm of rain. By the time the storm was over he was wet through, but being interested in the search for a plant, went on wandering till rather late in the even-

ing. If he had kept constantly in movement it is probable that no harm would have resulted from this little imprudence, but unfortunately he found the plant he was in search of, and this led him to do a little botanical anatomy with a microscope which he carried in his pocket. Absorbed in this occupation, he sat down on the bare rock, and forgot the minutes as they passed. He spent more than an hour in this way, and rose from his task with a feeling of chill, and a slight shiver, which, however, disappeared when his pedestrian exercise was resumed. On returning to the Peel he thought no more of the matter, and ate a hearty dinner, sitting rather late afterwards with Philip Stanburne, and drinking more than his usual allowance of brandy-and-water. The next day he did not go out, and towards evening complained of a slight pain or embarrassment in the chest. The symptoms gradually became alarming, a doctor was sent for, and Mr Stedman's illness was discovered to be a congestion of both lungs.

Of this malady he died. In his will, after various legacies, liberal but not excessive, to all the poor people who were his relations, and the relations of his deceased wife, he named "his dear friend and son, Philip Stanburne," residuary

legatee, "both in token of his own friendship and gratitude towards the said Philip Stanburne, and also because in making this bequest the testator believes that he is best fulfilling the wishes of his beloved daughter, Alice."

But, notwithstanding John Stedman's affectionate friendship for the man whom Alice had loved, there still remained in him much of the resolution of a stalwart enemy of Rome, and the resolution dictated a certain codicil written not long before his death. In this codicil he provided that, "in case the said Philip Stanburne should enter any order of the Church of Rome, whether secular or ecclesiastical, or endow the said Church of Rome with any portion of his wealth, then the foregoing will and testament should be void, and of none effect. And further, that the said Philip Stanburne should solemnly promise never to give or bequeath to the Church of Rome any portion of this bequest, and in case of his refusal to make such promise," the money should be disposed of as we will now explain.

The testator proceeded to affirm that it was still his desire to leave part of his property in such a manner as to testify his gratitude to Philip Stanburne; and therefore, if the latter took orders in the Church of Rome, Mr Stedman's bequest

should still pass to a person of the name of Stanburne, but professing the Protestant religion—namely, to John Stanburne, formerly of Wenderholme. In this case, however, a large deduction would be made from the legacy in favour of an intimate friend of the testator, Joseph Anison, formerly of Arkwright Lodge, near Whittlecup. All this was set forth with that minute and tedious detail which is necessary, or is supposed to be necessary, in every legal document.

Now for several years past Philip Stanburne had been firmly resolved, on the death of Mr Stedman (which would release him from his promise to Alice), to enter a monastic order remarkable for industry and simplicity of life, founded by the celebrated Father Muard, but since affiliated to the Benedictines; and it was a suspicion of this resolve, or perhaps more than a suspicion, which had dictated Mr Stedman's codicil. The will made no difference in Philip Stanburne's plans, and he was delighted that the Colonel should inherit what would probably turn out to be a fortune. When the question was formally put to him, he affirmed his intention of being a monk of *La Pierre qui Vire.*

In consequence of this declaration, the codicil took effect. The factory in Sootythorn, the house

at Chesnut Hill, and a capital sum of £20,000, went to Mr Joseph Anison; but even after all the legacies to poor relations, there still remained a residue of £35,000, which passed directly to the Colonel. Mr Stedman had been much richer than any one believed, and his fortune, already considerable in the lifetime of his daughter, had doubled since her death.

Philip Stanburne, who had been occasionally to Wenderholme since the Colonel's return, to inquire after Mrs Stanburne, and pass an hour or two with an old friend, now proposed to sell him Stanithburn Peel. "It would make me miserable," he said, "to sell it to anybody else, but to you it's different. Buy it, and go to live there."

But he did not really sell the Peel itself. He sold the land, and gave the strong old tower. The place was valued by friends, mutually appointed, who received a hint from Philip that they were not to count the Peel. The Colonel knew nothing about this, but gave £20,000 for the estate, and invested the remainder of his capital in something better than the Sootythorn Bank.

As Mrs Stanburne was now well enough to be left, the Colonel and Lady Helena set off one fine day for Stanithburn. The Peel had been ad-

mirably restored, though with great moderation, in Philip Stanburne's quiet and persevering way, and all its incongruities and anachronisms had been removed. When they came to the front door, who should open it but—Fyser!

"Please, sir," he said, "would you be so kind as to take me on again?"

The Colonel said not a word in answer, but he gave honest Fyser's hand such a shake that it was perfectly natural the tears should come into his eyes. The tears would come into anybody's eyes if his hand were squeezed like that.

Whilst her ladyship went to take her things off, Fyser said, "Would you like to step this way, sir?" The Colonel followed obediently.

"This will be your den, I suppose, sir, unless you would like to have it in another part of the 'ouse."

John Stanburne felt like a man in a dream. There was every scrap of his old den-furniture in the place. Philip Stanburne had bought it all at the Wenderholme sale—every atom of it, even to his old boot-jack. And as Mr Fyser had had the arrangement of it, you may be sure that it was in the old convenient and accustomed order.

But the Colonel and Lady Helena were still more surprised to find in the principal rooms of

the house various cabinets and other things of value which had formerly been at Wenderholme, and especially the museum of family relics which had occupied the centre of the great hall. In these cabinets and cases little plates of silver were discovered, on examination, to be inlaid, and each of these little plates was engraved with the inscription, "Presented to Colonel Stanburne by the Officers of the Twentieth Royal Lancashire Militia."

The regiment happened to be just then up for its annual training under a major-commanding, no new colonel having as yet been appointed. And one day there came rather a solemn deputation of officers to Stanithburn Peel, all in full uniform.

The spokesman of the deputation was our old acquaintance, Captain Eureton. He began by informing Colonel Stanburne that, although the lieutenant-colonelcy had been offered to the senior major, he had begged the lord-lieutenant to permit him to remain at the head of the regiment as major-commanding; and that now he and all the officers unanimously joined in entreating Colonel Stanburne to withdraw his resignation, and resume his old position amongst them. There was no mistaking the earnestness and sincerity of this

petition, and John Stanburne consented. He was received at Sootythorn at a great banquet given by the officers just before the disbanding of the regiment; and at the review which concluded the training, it was John Stanburne who commanded.

In the month of July Mrs Stanburne was herself again, and began to talk about Edith's wedding—a subject upon which young Jacob had been getting very impatient for some weeks previously. When it took place it was a very quiet affair; and the old lady gave the breakfast at Wenderholme Cottage, whereof she was now the recognised tenant at a rent of thirty pounds a-year, with a lease so long that if she lives to see the end of it, she will be an old woman indeed.

Mr Isaac Ogden very soon grew weary of his labours as a cotton-manufacturer, and longed again for his solitude of Twistle Farm. To afford him this, it was necessary to diminish young Jacob's labours as much as possible; and that calico-printing business at Whittlecup had to be given up. It could not be sold during old Jacob Ogden's life, but it was let, together with Arkwright Lodge, to Mr Joseph Anison, on terms exceedingly advantageous to the latter, who will be able, after all, to give handsome dowries to his

younger daughters, and to leave Miss Margaret the richest old maid in Whittlecup.

Young Jacob and his wife established themselves at Wenderholme, but she soon complained that he was too much away on business, and declared her intention of accompanying him on his journeys to Milend, which she has ever since been in the habit of doing. When at Milend (which has been much beautified and improved), they go a great deal to the Creampot, where old Mrs Ogden still devotes herself to the care of her unfortunate son. "I'm thankful to God," she says, "that our Jacob is so 'appy with his misfortin. Every time I give him his sovereign of a Saturday night he's as 'appy and proud as a little lad ten year old. And he's as well in 'ealth as anybody could wish for." Young Jacob and Edith are both very attentive to him, but it is thought better not to bring him to Wenderholme again, nor even to Milend. This makes it a great tie for poor Mrs Ogden, but she fulfils her duty with a noble self-abnegation, and tends "our Jacob" with the most minute and unrelaxing care. As for her fine carriage, she made a wedding-present of it to Edith, and has never been in it since, not even to do a little knitting. Her life is the simple old life that she was accustomed to in her

youth, and it suits her health so well, that if all old women that one hears of did not finish some day by dying, one might almost expect her to prolong her sojourn permanently upon the earth, in the green "Creampot" fields. But the recent death of old Sarah at Twistle Farm, and that of Susy Tattersall in Shayton, the lollipop-woman, have been serious warnings, and the new Shayton clergyman is a frequent visitor at the Creampot. Dr Bardly is not so much in request, on account of his heterodox views, and because Mrs Ogden's physical condition is still excellent, whatever may be her spiritual state.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Colonel and Lady Helena made a tour on the Continent in the autumn; for as their great permanent extravagances had been given up for ever, they found themselves able to indulge in temporary pleasures of this kind.

Young Jacob and Edith accompanied them as far as Geneva, and on their way from Paris it was decided that they should stop at Auxerre, and go thence to Avallon, which was not very far from the monastery of *La Pierre qui Vire.* The Colonel desired to see Philip Stanburne once again.

Through narrow and rocky valleys, indescribably picturesque, and full of a deep melancholy poetry of their own, they journeyed a whole day, and came at last to the confines of the monastery, in a wild stony desert amongst the hills, through which flowed a rapid stream. The ladies

could not enter, but young Jacob and the Colonel passed through the simple gateway. A monk received them in silence, and, in answer to a question of the Colonel, put his finger upon his lips. He then went to ask permission to speak from his superior.

The monk promised to lead the Colonel to Philip Stanburne. They passed along wild paths cut in the rock and the forest, with rudely-carved bas-reliefs of the chief scenes of the Passion erected at stated distances. They saw many monks engaged in the most laborious manual occupations: some were washing linen in the clear river; others were road-making, with picks and wheelbarrows; others were hard at work as masons, building the walls of some future portion of the monastery, or the enclosures of its fields. All worked and were silent, not even looking at the strangers as they passed. At length the three came to a little wood, and, having passed through the wood, to a small field on the steep slope of a hill. In the field two monks were ploughing in their monastic dress, with a pair of white oxen.

Suddenly the Angelus rang from the belfry of the monastery, and its clear tones filled the quiet valley where these monks had made their home. All the monks heard it, and all who heard it fell

instantaneously on their knees in the midst of their labour, wherever they might happen to be. The masons dropped their stones and trowels, the washermen prayed with the wet linen still in their grasp, the ploughman knelt between the handles of his plough, and the driver with the goad in his right hand. The Colonel's guide dropped upon the ploughed earth, and prayed. All in the valley prayed.

When this was over, the two Englishmen were led forward towards the oxen, and before the slow animals had resumed their toil, the Colonel had recognised their driver. So this was the life he had chosen—a life of rudest labour, with the simplest food and the severest discipline—a life of toil and silence. He knew the Colonel at once, but dared not speak to him, and placed his fingers on his lips, and goaded his oxen forward, and resumed his weary march.

A special permission having been procured, the monk talked with John Stanburne freely, saying that he loved his new life and the hardships of it, dwelling with quiet enthusiasm on the beautiful discipline of his order, and leading him over the rude and picturesque lands which had been reclaimed by the industry of his brethren.

But when they parted, there came a great pang

of regret in Philip Stanburne's heart for the free English life that he had lost—a pang of regret for Stanithburn, and that Alice should not be mistress there instead of Lady Helena.

And after the service in the humble chapel of the monastery—a service singularly devoid of the splendours of the Catholic worship—a monk lay prostrate across the threshold, doing penance. And all his brethren passed over him, one by one.

THE END.

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